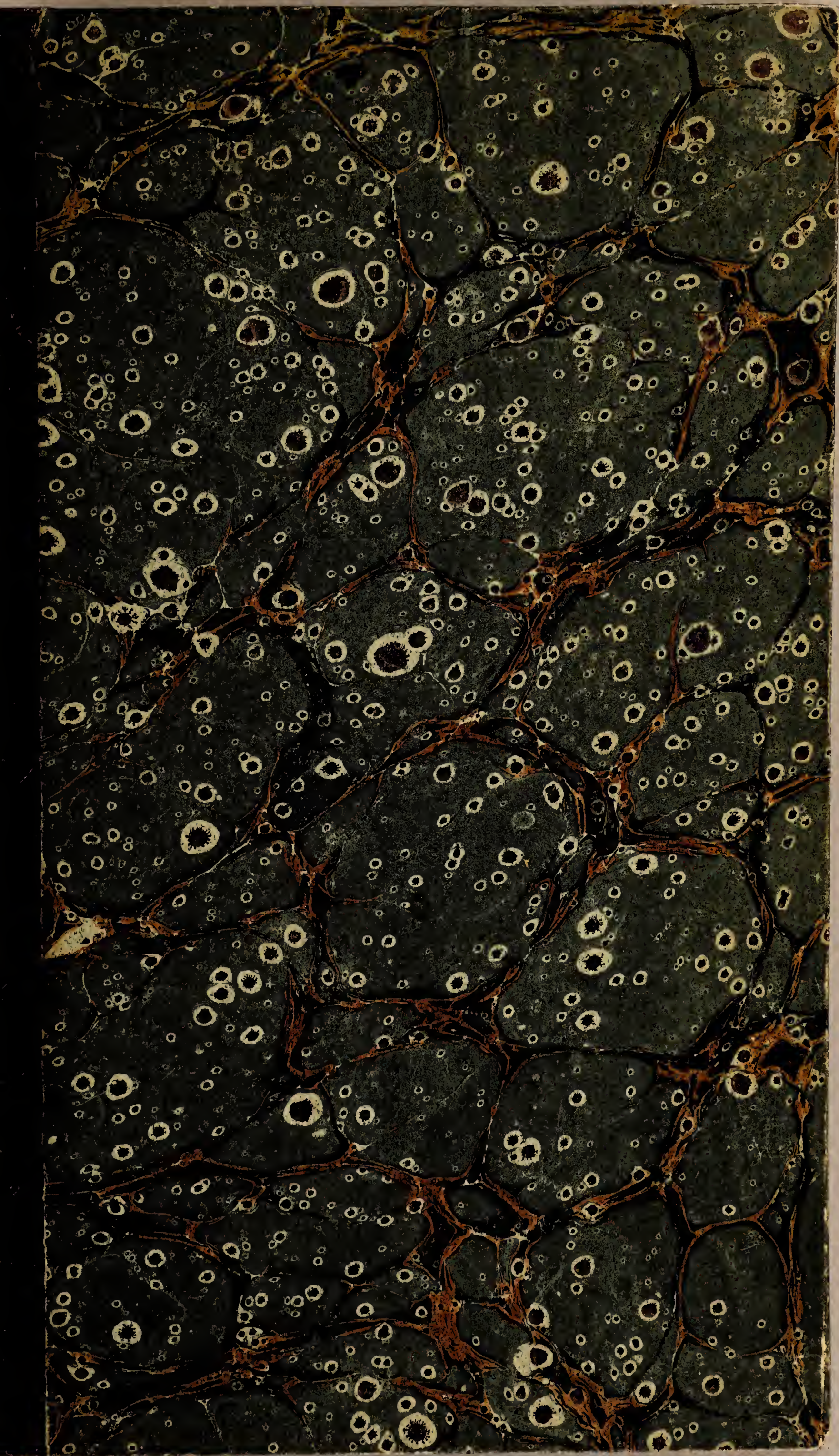
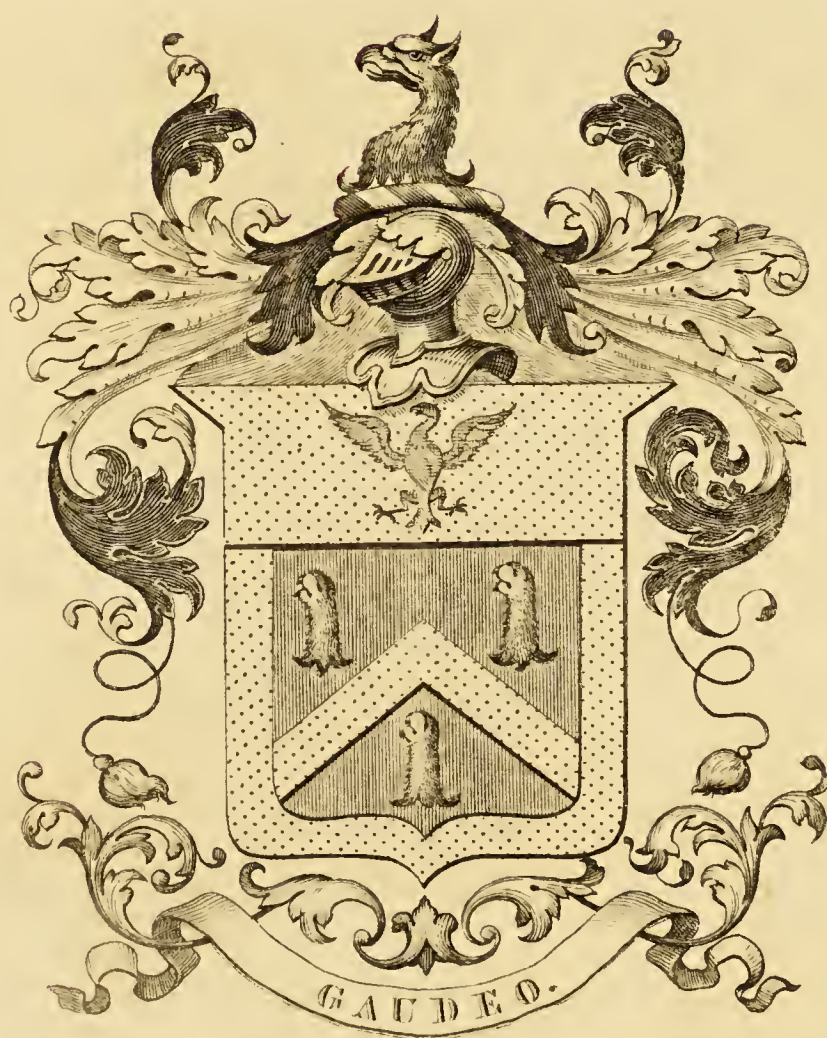






John Carter Brown.

19:5

Thin - Pt: 1st to 2nd

O R O O N O K O,

A

TRAGEDY,

As it is now Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

In DRURY-LANE.

BY

HIS MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

By THOMAS SOUTHERN.

With ALTERATIONS.

—*Quo fata trabunt, virtus secura sequetur.*

LUCAN. lib. 2. v. 287.

Virtus, recludens immeritis mori

Cælum, negatâ tentat iter viâ. HOR. Od. 2. lib. 3.

L O N D O N:

Printed for C. BATHURST, at the *Cross-Keys*, in *Fleet-Street*; and the rest of the PROPRIETORS.

MDCCCLIX.

JOHN CARTER BROWN

THE Merit of the tragic Scenes in this Play, has been universally acknowledged; because their Power has been universally and forcibly felt: The Plot is simple, yet there is a sufficient Number of Events to make the Representation active and busy; to raise and gratify Expectation; and to render the Issue interesting and important: The Attention is, throughout, invariably fixed upon the two principal Characters, *Oroonoko* and *Imoinda*; who are so connected as to make but one Object, in which all the Passions of the Audience, moved by the most tender and exquisite Distress, are concentrated.

It was therefore justly regretted, that these Scenes were degraded by a Connexion with some of the most loose and contemptible that have ever disgraced our Language and our Theatre: This Part of *Oroonoko*, if it stood alone, could not with respect to its mere comic Merit be ranked higher than a Droll for a Fair, where its Immorality ought to prevent its Exhibition; but as it is connected with the tragic, it is in a still higher Degree preposterous, absurd, and pernicious.

For these Reasons, an Attempt is now made to render *Oroonoko* a regular Tragedy of five Acts, in which the Editor proposed to himself the following Plan.

- 1st. To reject all the comic Scenes.
- 2^{dly}. To alter the tragic as little as possible.
- 3^{dly}. To lengthen it, not by Declamation, but Action. And

4^{thly}. To make this Action perfectly coincide with the original dramatic Story, as the Addition of foreign Events might raise a new Interest; and by dividing the Distress necessarily diminish its Force.

IN the Prosecution of this Plan, no new Character has been introduced ; but the Parts of *Aboan* and *Hotman*, have been considerably enlarged : *Hotman's* treachery is made an Instrument to produce new Incidents of Fidelity, Generosity, and Affection, between *Aboan* and *Oroonoko* ; and several new Scenes are added, to account for *Aboan's* precipitate Attempt to recover his Liberty, and to form and carry on the Conspiracy : Some tender Expostulations of *Imoinda* against the Governor's Importunity, have also been inserted in the first Scene between them, expressing that refined Sensibility which always increases Pity, by at once heightening the Character of the Sufferer and our Idea of the Distress.

A total Alteration has also been made in the musical Part, as it was thought that the Songs supposed to be sung by the Slaves on this Occasion, should, though amorous, be plaintive, the Expression of Beings at once capable of Love, and conscious of a Condition in which all its Delicacies must become the Instruments of Pain.

WHEN the Conduct of the dramatic Action was farther pursued, with the critical Attention which the proposed Alterations made necessary, several Inaccuracies appeared which it was thought proper to remove.

IN the first Scene of the third Act (*Old Edit.* p. 37, and 38.) *Aboan* was represented as suspecting *Hotman* of Treachery, from his Violence ; yet at the same Time intimating that something was in Agitation, with sufficient Plainness to enable him, if false, to prevent the Execution of it, by putting the Planters upon their Guard : He says indeed in the same Breath, that he will know him more before he trusts him farther ; but after having trusted him so far, a Resolution not to trust

trust him farther could not prevent the Mischief he had Reason to dread : But this is not all ; after *Aboan* has thus determined to trust *Hotman* no farther without farther Trial, we find that without farther Trial he is farther trusted ; for, in the fourth Scene of the same Act (p. 47), *Aboan* suffers *Oroonoko* to disclose his whole Scheme in *Hotman*'s Presence, and even mentions the seizure of the Ship himself ; yet immediately after he has been thus trusted, *Oroonoko* makes an absurd Proposal to discover whether he ought to be trusted or no ; and even after the Suspicions of *Hotman* had been confirmed by Experiment, after *Oroonoko* had declared it to be his Opinion that he would certainly betray them (p. 49, l. 29.) ; and after *Aboan* had provok'd him by an Insult (p. 50, l. 9.), he is trusted with the only Particular that he did not know before, the Time of the Rendezvous (p. 50, l. 10), and no Step is taken to prevent the ill Consequences of his Perfidy : There seems also to be an Inconsistency in what *Oroonoko* and *Aboan* say to each other, upon the Detection : *Oroonoko* says it was *Hotman*'s Violence made him first suspect him ; but it was *Aboan* only, and not *Oroonoko*, that was Witness of this Violence (p. 37, and 38, l. 15.) : *Aboan*, we know, suspected him from this Violence ; yet *Aboan* now expresses his Wonder that such a Blaze should be without Fire : And, indeed, that there should be *Blaze* without *Fire*, was enough to make any Man wonder (See p. 49, l. 17, 18, 19, 20.). Besides, tho' *Aboan* considers *Hotman*'s Violence as a Mark of Treachery, it does not any where appear that his Suspicions were well founded, 'till the Discovery is actually made : We are left to judge of him, wholly from the Trial ; and the Trial, when it is at last made by *Oroonoko*, is such as could only bring his Courage, not his Fidelity, to the Test ; but tho' his Fear only is discovered, yet both *Aboan* and *Oroonoko* infer that he is guilty ; an Impropriety not less manifest than that of making this Trial before the rest of the Conspirators, whose Firmness was certainly endangered by an artful, pathetic,

and exaggerated Representation of the Dangers they would incur.

IN the same Act, tho' *Oroonoko* declares, The Means that lead to Liberty must *not be bloody* (p. 45, l. 5, 6.), yet he resolves to *strike first* (p. 44, l. 24.); it follows therefore, that by not being bloody he can only mean that no Blood shall be shed in Revenge, but such Blood only as the Struggle for Liberty makes necessary; but the Resolution to *strike first*, was an unjustifiable Resolution, as *Oroonoko* himself abundantly proves in this very Conference with *Aboan*; who, being unable to answer his Arguments, works him to his Purpose by alarming his Passions. *Oroonoko* had yet nothing to resent that could justify his taking Arms; he had been wronged only by the Captain; to all others, for ought he knew to the contrary, he had equal and uncommon Obligations; this seems, therefore, to be a Fault in his Conduct, which renders him somewhat less worthy both of Reverence and Pity, than if his Misfortunes had arisen from the Fault of another.

IN this Act, therefore, the following Alterations have been made; *Oroonoko* absolutely refuses to break any Tie of Honour, merely through Fear that others first should break them; *Aboan* is represented as effectually deceived by *Hotman's* Zeal, and in consequence of this Deception as trusting him with the Conspiracy before *Oroonoko* had seen him: *Hotman* is afterwards represented as practising the same Arts upon *Oroonoko*, which his superior Penetration detects; not by alarming his Fears, but by shewing his Consciousness of Guilt; and he makes his Experiment, only as a Proof of *Aboan's* fatal Mistake; not as a Means of avoiding Danger, but as a Demonstration of Danger already incurred: This Alteration, besides obviating the Inconsistency of the Original, produces a new Incident of that Kind which has generally been thought affecting in a great Degree. *Aboan* is overwhelm'd with the Thought of having de-
feated

feated the whole Enterprize upon which the Liberty and Life of his Prince depended, by his Precipitation and Credulity; and *Oroonoko*, tho' his superior Sagacity had detected the Artifice by which his Friend had been deceived to their mutual Ruin, is so far from reproaching him, or aggravating his Failing into a Fault, that he sooths the Anguish of his Mind, and prevents his laying violent Hands on himself: *Hotman* is not made privy to the Time and Place of meeting, and a Resolution is taken between *Oroonoko* and *Aboan* to rendezvous yet earlier than the Time appointed; this preserves them from Despair, and makes it possible that they may get on board the Vessel before *Hotman* has made his Discovery, at least before Measures could be taken to prevent them: Thus a new Situation of Distress is produced, which, if their Hope had never been revived by an Alteration of their Plan, could never have happened; for just at the Crisis, when this Hope was about to be fulfilled, it is suddenly and totally disappointed, by an Account that *Hotman* has perpetrated his Treachery, and that the Governor is in Arms.

THESE Observations, however, are less intended to solicit Praise, than to prevent Censure; and it is not necessary farther to mention the Alterations, or the Reasons upon which they were made; they will be easily discovered upon a Comparison of the two Copies, if it is ever thought worth while to make it. Some Passages are left out, merely because the Speeches in which they occurred, were too long both for the Audience and the Actor; and one or two, because the Sentiment or Expression was thought exceptionable.

Oroonoko, when he mentions the Father of *Imoinda* to *Blandford* (p. 27, l. 30), calls him "a Man of many Virtues," yet says that he chang'd Christianity for Paganism; a Sentiment, of which the evil Tendency is too manifest to be proved.

Blandford

Blandford and *Stanmore*, in their Speeches to *Oroonoko*, when they find him chain'd to the Ground (p. 70.), allude to the poetical Fictions of *Cadmus* and the *Titans*, which it was impossible he could understand: And in the Speech of *Oroonoko*, when he surrenders his Sword to *Blandford*, there were two Verses of which the Imagery should never be exhibited (p. 62, l. 26, 27.).

As to the general Tendency or Moral of the whole, it is not much influenced by the Alterations or Additions, except that *Hotman* is not suffered to escape unpunished; and that the same Disposition of *Aboan*, which urged him to propose Methods of Deliverance that were bloody and revengeful, betray'd him into a Folly that subverted all his Hopes, and terminated in the Destruction of those whom he most wished to save.





PROLOGUE.

THIS Night your tributary Tears we claim,
For Scenes that *Southern* drew; a fav'rite Name!
He touch'd your Fathers' Hearts with gen'rous Woe,
And taught your Mothers' youthful Eyes to flow;
For this he claims hereditary Praise,
From Wits and Beauties of our modern Days;
Yet, Slave to Custom in a laughing Age,
With ribbald Mirth he stain'd the sacred Page;
While Virtue's Shrine he rear'd, taught Vice to mock,
And join'd, in Sport, the Buskin and the Sock:
O! haste to part them! — burst th' opprobrious Band!
Thus *Art* and *Nature*, with one Voice demand:
O! haste to part them! blushing *Virtue* cries; —
Thus urg'd, our Bard this Night to part them tries. —
To mix with *Southern's* though his Verse aspire,
He bows with Rev'rence to the hoary Sire:
With honest Zeal, a Father's Shame he veils;
Pleas'd to succeed, not blushing though he fails:
Fearless, yet humble; for 'tis all his Aim,
That hence you go no worse than here you came:
Let then his Purpose consecrate his Deed,
And from your Virtue your Applause proceed.

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Oroonoko,</i>	<i>Mr. Garrick.</i>
<i>Aboan,</i>	<i>Mr. Holland.</i>
Lieutenant-Governor of <i>Surinam,</i>	<i>Mr. Burton.</i>
<i>Blandford,</i>	<i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
<i>Stanmore,</i> Captain of the Militia,	<i>Mr. Packer.</i>
<i>Capt. Driver,</i>	<i>Mr. Bransby.</i>
<i>Hotman,</i>	<i>Mr. Blakes.</i>

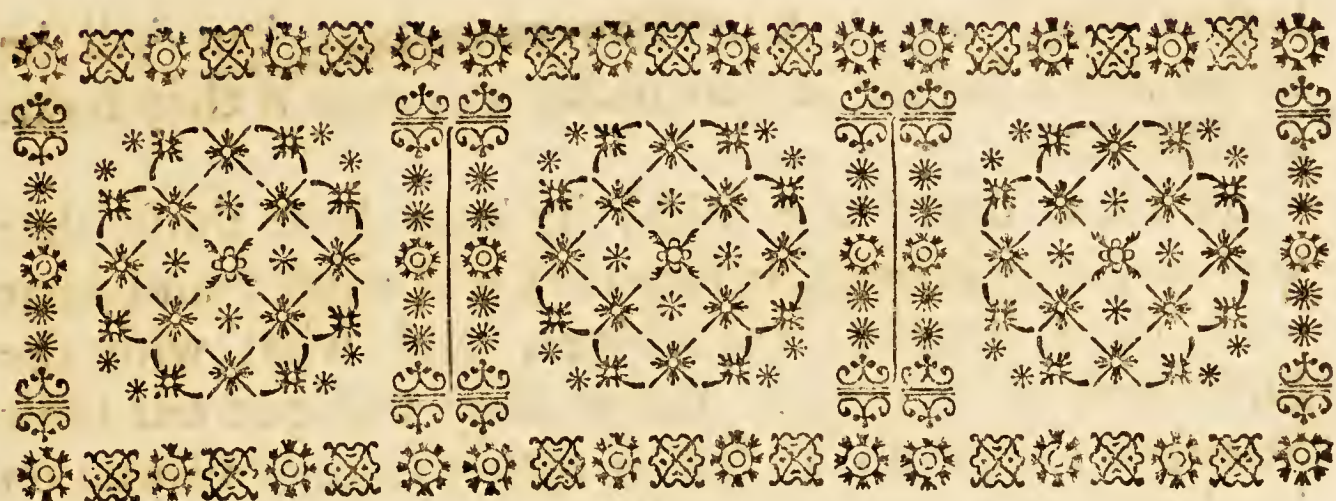
W O M E N.

<i>Imoinda,</i>	<i>Mrs. Cibber.</i>
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Planters, Indians, Negroes, Men, Women, and Children.

The SCENE *Surinam*, a Colony in the *West-Indies*,
at the Time of the Action of this Tragedy, in the
Possession of the *English*.

O R O O-



ORONOKO.



A C T I.

S C E N E I.

Enter several Planters.

1st Planter.

ELL Neighbours, Captain *Driver* has brought us a fresh Supply — more Slaves.

W *2d Plan.* Aye, and I'm sure we had never more need of 'em.

3d Plan. That's true indeed, and I'm afraid we shall never have less.

4th Plan. Yes, yes; we shall have enough of 'em. I warrant you, when they come to breed.

3d Plan. Breed! it's a sign you're a new Comer; Pox on 'em, a parcel of lazy, obstinate, untractable Pagans; — half of 'em are so sulky when they first come, that they won't eat their Victuals when it's set

B

before

before 'em, and a Christian may beat 'em 'till he drops down before he can make 'em eat, if they ha'nt a mind to it.

2d Plan. Beat! aye faith, he may beat those that will eat, long enough before they will work: and what with their starving themselves, and what with the Discipline they require before they will put out their Strength: they die as fast as rotten Sheep, plague on 'em! the poor industrious Planter loses the Money they cost him, and his Ground runs to Ruin for want of their Labour.

1st Plan. Aye, in truth; a Christian Colony has a hard time of it, that is forc'd to deal in this cursed Heathen Commodity: here every time a Ship comes in, my money goes for a great raw-boned negroe Fellow, that has the Impudence to think he is my Fellow-creature, with as much Right to Liberty as I have, and so grows fullen and refuses to work; or for a young Wench, who will howl Night and Day after a Brat or a Lover forsooth, which nothing can drive out of her Head but a Cat-o'nine-tails; and if Recourse is had to that Remedy, 'tis ten to one but she takes the next Opportunity to pick my Pocket by hanging herself.

4th Plan. Nay, as far as I see yet, the Women are worse than the Men: but 'Squire *Blandford* has got one that they say is not of their complexion.

3d Plan. So they say; but she's of the Breed, I'll warrant her—she's one of the sulky ones—the Lieutenant-Governor has taken a Fancy to her; and yet, wou'd you believe it, she gives herself airs and will scarce speak to him.

2d Plan. I've heard of her; they call her *Clemene*.

1st Plan. *Clemene*, with a Murrain to her; a pretty Name indeed for a mongrel Succabus, which for ought we know may be half Sister to the Devil.

4th Plan. 'Tis a Wonder however that his Honour don't buy her.

3d Plan. She was in a Lot that Mr. *Blandford* drew for the Lord-Governor himself, who you know is expected

pected by the next Ship from *England*, and she cannot be sold without his Consent,

4th Plan. In a Lot drawn for the Lord-Governor?— I don't yet perfectly understand this Method of drawing Lots.

1st Plan. No! why nothing is so easy; the Colony agrees with the Buchaneer to bring a certain Number of Slaves, at so much a Head; and when they come in, we draw for them to prevent Disputes; for as they're all of a Price, every one you know wou'd be for picking out the best, and nobody wou'd consent to take up with what others shou'd have—come along with us to the Market, and you'll see how it is presently; the Slaves are now coming on Shore.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II, *an open Place.*

Enter Lieutenant-Governor Blandford and Stanmore.

Gov. There's no resisting your Fortune, *Blandford*; you draw all the Prizes.

Blan. I draw for our Lord Governor, you know; his Fortune favours me.

Gov. I grudge him nothing this Time; but if Fortune had favour'd me in the last Sale, the fair Slave had been mine; *Clemene* had been mine.

Blan. Are you still in Love with her?

Gov. Ev'ry Day more in Love with her.

Enter Capt. Driver, teased and pulled about by several Planters, Men and Women.

Wom. Here have I six Slaves in my Lot, and not a Man among them; all Women and Children; what can I do with 'em, Captain? Pray consider I am a Woman myself.

1st Plan. I have all Men in mine: Pray, Captain, let the Men and Women be mingled together, for the Good of the Plantation.

2d Plan. Ay, ay, a Man and a Woman, Captain, for the Good of the Plantation?

B 2

Capt.

Capt. Let them mingle together and be damn'd, what care I? Would you have me pimp for the Good of the Plantation?

1st Plan. I am a constant Customer, Captain.

Wom. I am always ready Money to you, Captain.

1st Plan. For that Matter, Mistress, my Money is as ready as yours.

Wom. Pray hear me, Captain.

Capt. Look you, I have done my Part by you; I have brought the Number of Slaves you bargain'd for; if your Lots have not pleas'd you, you must draw again among yourselves.

3d Plan. I am contented with my Lot.

4th Plan. I am very well satisfy'd.

3d Plan. We'll have no drawing again.

Capt. Do you hear, Mistress? you may hold your Tongue: For my Part I expect my Money.

Wom. Captain, no body questions or scruples the Payment: But I won't hold my Tongue; 'tis too much to pray and pay too: One may speak for one's own, I hope.

Capt. Well, what would you say?

Wom. I say no more than I can make out.

Capt. Out with it then.

Wom. I say, Things have not been so fair carried as they might have been. How do I know but you have juggled together in my Absence? You drew the Lots before I came, I'm sure.

Capt. That's your own Fault, Mistress; you might have come sooner.

Wom. Then here's a Prince, as they say, among the Slaves, and you set him down to go as a common Man.

Capt. Why, what should make him worth more than a common Man? He'll not do the more Work for being a Prince; will he?

Gov. Where are the Slaves, Captain? They are long coming.

Blan. And who is this Prince that's fallen to my Lot

Lot for the Lord Governor? Let me know something of him, that I may treat him accordingly; who is he?

Capt. He's the Devil of a Fellow, I can tell you; a Prince every Inch of him: You have paid dear enough for him, for all the Good he'll do you: I was forc'd to clap him in Irons, and did not think the Ship safe neither. You are in Hostility with the *Indians*; they say, they threaten you daily: You had best have an Eye upon him.

Blan. But who is he?

Gov. And how do you know him to be a Prince?

Capt. He is Son and Heir to the great King of *Angola*, a mischievous Monarch in those Parts, who, by his good Will, would never let any of his Neighbours be in quiet. This Son was his General; a plaguy fighting Fellow. I have formerly had Dealings with him for Slaves, which he took Prisoners, and have got pretty roundly by him. But the Wars being at an End, and nothing more to be got by the Trade of that Country, I made bold to bring the Prince along with me.

Gov. How could you do that?

Blan. What! steal a Prince out of his own Country. Impossible!

Capt. 'Twas hard indeed; but I did it. You must know this *Oroonoko* ———

Blan. Is that his Name?

Capt. Ay, *Oroonoko*.

Gov. *Oroonoko*.

Capt. Is naturally inquisitive about the Men and Manners of the White Nations. Because I could give him some Account of the other Parts of the World, I grew very much into his Favour: In return of so great an Honour, you know I could do no less, upon my coming away, than invite him on board me: Never having been in a Ship, he appointed his Time, and I prepared my Entertainment; he came the next Evening, as private as he could, with about some twenty

along with him. The Punch went round ; and as many of his Attendants as would be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on Shore ; the rest we secured ; and so you have the Prince *Oroonoko*.

1st Plan. Gad a mercy, Captain ; there you were with him, i'Faith.

2d Plan. Such Men as you are fit to be employed in public Affairs : The Plantation will thrive by you.

3d Plan. Industry ought to be encouraged.

Capt. There's nothing done without it, Boys. I have made my Fortune this Way.

Blan. Unheard of Villainy !

Stan. Barbarous Treachery !

Blan. They applaud him for't.

Gov. But, Captain, methinks you have taken a great deal of Pains for this Prince *Oroonoko* ; why did you part with him at the common Rate of Slaves ?

Capt. Why, Lieutenant-Governor, I'll tell you ! I did design to carry him to *England*, to have show'd him there ; but I found him troublesome upon my Hands, and I'm glad I'm rid of him — Oh, oh, hark, they come.

Black Slaves, Men, Women, and Children, pass across the Stage by two and two ; Aboan, and others of Oroonoko's Attendants, two and two : Oroonoko last of all, in Chains.

Capt. Now, Governor, pray observe him.

Oro. So, Sir, you have kept your Word with me.

Capt. I am a better Christian, I thank you, than to keep it with a Heathen.

Oro. You are a Christian, be a Christian still :
If you have any God that teaches you
To break your Word, I need not curse you more :
Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.
You faithful Followers of my better Fortune,
We have been Fellow-Soldiers in the Field ;

[Embracing his Friends.

Now

Now we are Fellow-Slaves. This last Farewel,
Be sure of one Thing that will comfort us,
Whatever World we are next thrown upon
Cannot be worse than this.

[All Slaves go off but Oroonoko.]

Capt. You see what a bloody Pagan he is, Governor; but I took care that none of his Followers should be in the same Lot with him, for fear they should undertake some desperate Action, to the Danger of the Colony.

Oro. Live still in fear; it is the Villain's Curse,
And will revenge my Chains: Fear even me,
Who have no Power to hurt thee. Nature abhors,
And drives thee out from the Society
And Commerce of Mankind, for Breach of Faith.
Men live and prosper but in mutual Trust,
A Confidence of one another's Truth:
That thou hast violated. I have done;
I know my Fortune, and submit to it.

Gov. Sir, I am sorry for your Fortune, and would help it if I could.

Blan. Take off his Chains. You know your Condition; but you are fallen into honourable Hands: You are the Lord Governor's Slave, who will use you nobly: In his Absence it shall be my Care to serve you.

[Blandford applying to him.]

Oro. I hear you, but I can believe no more.

Gov. Captain, I'm afraid the World won't speak so honourably of this Action of yours, as you would have 'em.

Capt. I have the Money, let the World speak and be damn'd; I care not.

Oro. I would forget myself. Be satisfied. *[To Blan.]* I am above the Rank of common Slaves. Let that content you. The Christian there, that knows me,

For his own sake will not discover more.

Capt. I have other Matters to mind. You have

have him, and much Good may do you with your Prince.

[Exit.

The Planters pulling and staring at Oroonoko.

Blan. What would you have there? You stare as if you never saw a Man before. Stand farther off.

[Turns 'em away.

Oro. Let 'em stare on.

I am unfortunate, but not ashamed
Of being so: No, let the Guilty blush,
The white Man that betray'd me: Honest Black
Disdains to change its Colour. I am ready:
Where must I go? Dispose me as you please,
I am not well acquainted with my Fortune,
But must learn to know it better: So I know, you say,
Degrees make all Things easy.

Blan. All Things shall be easy.

Oro. Tear off this Pomp, and let me know myself:
The slavish Habit best becomes me now.
Hard Fare and Whips, and Chains may overpower
The frailer Flesh, and bow my Body down:
But there's another, nobler Part of me,
Out of your Reach, which you can never tame.

Blan. You shall find nothing of this Wretchedness
You apprehend. We are not Monsters all.
You seem unwilling to disclose yourself:
Therefore for Fear the mentioning your Name
Should give you new Disquiets, I presume
To call you *Cæsar*.

Oro. I am myself; but call me what you please.

Gov. A very good Name, *Cæsar*.
And very fit for his Character.

Oro. Was *Cæsar* then a Slave?

Gov. I think he was; to Pirates too: He was a great
Conqueror, but unfortunate in his Friends —

Oro. His Friends were Christians?

Blan. No.

Oro. No! that's strange.

Gov. And murder'd by 'em.

Oro.

O R O O N O K O.

9

Oro. I would be *Cæsar* then. Yet I will live.

Blan. Live to be happier.

Oro. Do what you will with me.

Blan. I will wait upon you, attend, and serve you.
[*Exit with Oroonoko.*]

S C E N E III.

A Grove, a Plantation seen at a little Distance.

Aboan alone.

At length I am alone—but why alone?
My Thoughts are worse Society to me
Than the poor Slaves with whom I'm doom'd to labour—
I cannot bear it—if I turn my View
Backward or forward, round me, or within,
'Tis all Regret, Oppression, and Despair.—
Yet why Despair!—something may yet be done;—
May yet be done—hold—let me most distrust
The flatterer Hope—if she one moment lures me
To patient Suff'rance, from that fatal Moment
Insidious Slumbers steal upon my Virtue—
I shall—distraction! *must* grow tame by Habit—
I must—what else has quench'd in those around me
That Indignation which now choaks my Utt'rance?
All Hell is in the Thought—my struggle must be now,
This instant Now—precipitation's Wisdom—

Slaves at a distance.

Slav. Hoa! Hoa! Aboan Aboan—

Abo. Hark! here they come—It must, it shall be so
Hackney'd they are in mis'rys new to me,
Like secret Fire that smokeless Embers hide.
Yet still the Love of Liberty must live.

Enter three Slaves.

1st Slav. Here, where are you? come, to work, to work,

2d Slav. You are a Stranger, ign'rant of your Duty;
Or

Or else this Idleness had been chastis'd
With many a smarting Blow.

3d Slav. Aye good Aboan
Come, come with us, for if the Overseer
Ev'n now surprise us——

2d Slav. Hush, I hear his Voice——

1st Slav. No, no, 'tis not he——

Abo. Wou'd he scourge us then?

3d Slav. Wou'd he? Experience soon will tell you
that.

Abo. Has then Experience ever told it you?

3d Slav. Has it? don't ask me—wou'd I could say no?

Abo. You have been beaten then to patient Drudgery.

2d Slav. 'Tis shameful to confess it, yet 'tis true.

Abo. What to confess is shameful, is it not
More shameful still to suffer?

3d Slav. What if it be?

Abo. Then suffer it no longer.

1st Slav. No longer—no, if we knew how to help it.

Abo. Knew how? —suppose a Friend should tell
you how?

They gather eagerly about him.

2d Slav. What say you?

1st Slav. Are there ways?

3d Slav. Can you tell us?

Abo. I see by this Impatience you're not quell'd
Into a torpid tame Insensibility;
I'll tell you then such News as shall revive
Each drooping Virtue, string each Nerve anew.

All Slav. What is it?—what is it?—

Abo. There is among you now a mighty Prince,
Great as a tutelary God in Arms;
Before the Lightening of whose dreaded Sword,
These pale, cold, half-form'd Tyrants that insult ye
Wou'd vanish, like thin Mists before the Sun.

1st Slav. What did he come with you?

Abo. He came with me,
I am myself distinguish'd by his Friendship,
And oft with him have led the Front of Battle.

2d Slav. But how, where——

3d Slav. Is there only you and he?

Abo. There are six more of high Command about him,

All try'd, all firm, all fit for great Atchievements.

1st Slav. Where are they?

Abo. The Prince, my Lord, not long since parted from me;

The rest, not now far off, will soon be found——

When we were parted he embrac'd us all;

My Friends, says he, "One thing will comfort us,

"Whatever World we are thrown next upon

"Cannot be worse than this"——

These were my royal Master's Words at parting,

And sure you cannot doubt but they are true.

Shall we then, having nothing worse to fear,

Bear with dull sluggish Patience what we suffer!—

If nothing's worse the Chance is all for gain:—

There can be Danger then in no Attempt;

And if there was 'twere better still, for Danger

Has always its Equivalent in Glory.

The Slaves look on each other eagerly, as silently asking each other what they think—after a Pause

1st Slav. And will this Prince, and you, and these
your Friends

Assist us to be free?

Abo. Will you with them

Join Hands in the Attempt?——

A Cry without at some distance—the Slaves start and seem terrified.

What cry was that?

2d Slav. 'Tis the Complaint of wretched Slaves,
extorted

By bloody Whips laid on without Remorse,

And without Cause—e'er Night perhaps from us,

And you, such Cry may by such Stripes be forc'd—

Abo. Ye Gods! and shall we not resist it then!

Slaves. We will——

Abo.

Their Chains are heavy: they have hardly found
So kind a Master. May I ask you, Sir,
What is become of them: perhaps I should not.
You will forgive a Stranger.

Blan. I'll enquire,
And use my best Endeavours, where they are,
To have 'em gently us'd.

Oro. Once more I thank you.
You offer every Cordial that can keep
My Hopes alive, to wait a better Day.
What friendly Care can do, you have apply'd.
But Oh! I have a Grief admits no Cure.

Blan. You do not know, Sir——

Oro. Can you raise the Dead?
Pursue and overtake the Wings of Time?
And bring about again the Hours, the Days,
The Years that made me happy?

Blan. That is not to be done.

Oro. No, there is nothing to be done for me.

[Kneeling and kissing the Earth.]

Thou God adored! thou ever glorious Sun!
If she be yet on Earth send me a Beam
Of thy All-seeing Pow'r to light me to her!
Or if thy Sister Goddess has preferr'd
Her Beauty to the Skies, to be a Star;
O tell me where she shines, that I may stand
Whole Nights, and gaze upon her.

Blan. I am rude, and interrupt you.

Oro. I am troublesome:

But pray give me your pardon. My swell'n Heart
Bursts out its Passage, and I must complain.
O! can you think of nothing dearer to me?
Dearer than Liberty, my Country, Friends,
Much dearer than my Life? That I have lost—
The tend'rest, best lov'd, and loving Wife.

Blan. Alas! I pity you.

Oro. Do pity me:

Pity's a-kin to Love; and every Thought

Of

Of that soft Kind is welcome to my Soul.
I would be pity'd here.

Blan. I dare not ask
More than you please to tell me : But, if you
Think it convenient to let me know
Your Story, I dare promise you to bear
A Part in your Distress, if not assist you.

Oro. Thou honest-hearted Man! I wanted such,
Just such a Friend as thou art, that would sit
Still as the Night, and let me talk whole Days
Of my *Imoinda*. O! I'll tell thee all
From first to last ; and pray observe me well.

Blan. I will most heedfully.

Oro. There was a Stranger in my Father's Court,
Valu'd and honour'd much : He was a White,
The first I ever saw of your Complexion :
Of many Virtues, and so fam'd in Arms,
He still commanded all my Father's Wars.
I was bred under him. One fatal Day,
The Armies joining, he before me stepp'd,
Receiving in his Breast a poison'd Dart
Levell'd at me ; he dy'd within my Arms.
I've tir'd you already.

Blan. Pray go on.

Oro. He left an only Daughter, whom he brought
An Infant to *Angola*. When I came
Back to the Court, a happy Conqueror,
Humanity oblig'd me to condole
With this sad Virgin for a Father's Loss.
Lost for my Safety. I presented her
With all the Slaves of Battle to atone
Her Father's Ghost. But when I saw her Face,
And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself
To be the Sacrifice. She bow'd and blush'd ;
I wonder'd and ador'd. The Sacred Pow'r,
That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my Tongue,
Inclin'd her Heart, and all our Talk was Love.

Blan. Then you were happy.

Oro. O! I was too happy.

I mar-

I marry'd her : And tho' my Country's Custom
 Indulg'd the Privilege of many Wives,
 I swore myself never to know but her.
 She grew with Child, and I grew happier still.
 O my *Imoinda* ! but it could not last.
 Her fatal Beauty reach'd my Father's Ears :
 He sent for her to Court, where, cursed Court
 No Woman comes, but for his am'rous Use.
 He raging to possess her, she was forc'd
 To own herself my Wife. The furious King
 Started at Incest : But grown desperate,
 Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd,
 In mad Revenge, which I could never learn,
 He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,
 Far from my Hopes ever to see her more.

Blan. Most barbarous of Fathers ! the sad Tale
 Has struck me dumb with Wonder.

Oro. I have done.
 I'll trouble you no farther : Now and then
 A Sigh will have its Way : That shall be all.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. *Blandford*, the Lieutenant-Governor is gone
 to your Plantation. He desires you would bring the
 Royal Slave with you. The Sight of his fair Mistress,
 he says, is an Entertainment for a Prince ; he would
 have his Opinion of her.

Oro. Is he a Lover ?

Blan. So he says himself : He flatters a beautiful
 Slave that I have, and calls her Mistress.

Oro. Must he then flatter her to call her Mistress ?
 I pity the proud Man, who thinks himself
 Above being in Love ; What, tho' she be a Slave,
 She may deserve him.

Blan. You shall judge of that, when you see her, Sir,

Oro. I go with you. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E

S C E N E II. *A Plantation.**Lieutenant-Governor following Imoinda.*

Gov. I have disturb'd you, I confess my Fault,
 My fair *Clemene*; but begin again,
 And I will listen to your mournful Song,
 Sweet as the soft complaining Nightingale's.
 While every Note calls out my trembling Soul,
 And leaves me silent, as the Midnight Groves,
 Only to shelter you; sing, sing again,
 And let me wonder at the many Ways
 You have to ravish me.

Imo. O I can weep
 Enough for you, and me, if that will please you.

Gov. You must not weep: I come to dry your Tears,
 And raise you from your Sorrow.

Imo. Can that be,
 When all your Actions and your Looks convince me
 That you wou'd keep me here, still far from those
 For whom the Tears I shed must flow for ever?—

Gov. They must not sure—be all the past forgotten,
 Look forwards now, where better Prospects rise,
 New Pleasures court you, and new Friends invite.

Imo. Alas! can I—I know not what to say—
 Nature has form'd you of a diff'rent Kind,
 Or thus you cou'd not talk; and shou'd I reason
 From what I feel, you wou'd not understand me.

Gov. O! Yes, my Heart has all the soft Sensations,
 Has all that Friendship, and that Love inspires—

Imo. Let your Heart answer for me then, cou'd you,
 Forc'd to some distant Land, unknown, forlorn,
 A Slave, dependant on another's Will,
 Cut off from all that Habit has endear'd,
 Cut off from Friendship, from domestic Joy—
 Could you forget all these!—alas!—they're past ———

[*Bursts into Tears.*]

Gov. O! fair *Clemene*, there is yet a Passion
 Which can obliterate all the Joys and Pains

That

That others have imprest ; make room for that
 And all I wish is done—look upon me :
 Look with the Eyes of kind indulging Love,
 That I may have full Cause for what I say :
 I come to offer you your Liberty,
 And be myself the Slave. You turn away.

[Following her,

But every thing becomes you. I may take
 This pretty Hand : I know your Modesty
 Would draw it back : But you will take it ill,
 If I should let it go, I know you wou'd.
 You shall be gently forc'd to please yourself ;
 That you will thank me for.

*[She struggles and gets her Hand from him, then
 he offers to kiss her.*

Nay if you struggle with me, I must take——

Imo. You may my Life, that I can part with freely.

[Exit.

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, and Oroonoko to him.

Blan. So, Governor, we don't disturb you, I hope :
 Your Mistress has left you : You were making Love,
 She's thankful for the Honour, I suppose.

Gov. Quite insensible to all I say, and do :
 When I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps,
 But never answers me as I would have her.

Stan. There's something nearer than her Slavery,
 that touches her.

Blan. What do her Fellow-slaves say of her ; can't
 they find the Cause ?

Gov. Some of them, who pretend to be wiser than the
 rest, and hate her, I suppose for being us'd better than
 they are, will needs have it that she is with Child.

Blan. Poor Wretch ! if it be so, I pity her :
 She has lost a Husband, who perhaps was dear
 To her, and then you cannot blame her.

Oro. If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.

[sighing.

Gov. No, no, it is not so : If it be so,

C

I must

I must still love her : And, desiring still,
I must enjoy her.

Blan. Try what you can do with fair Means, and
welcome.

Gov. I'll give you ten Slaves for her.

Blan. You know she is our Lord Governor's : But
if I could dispose of her, I would not now, especially
to you.

Gov. Why not to me ?

Blan. I mean against her Will. You are in love
with her ;

And we all know what your Desires would have :
Love stops at nothing but Possession.

Were she within your Pow'r, you do not know
How soon you would be tempted to forget
The Nature of the Deed, and, may be, act
A Violence, you after would repent.

Oro. 'Tis Godlike in you to protect the Weak.

Gov. Fie, fie, I would not force her. Tho' she be
a Slave, her Mind is free, and should consent.

Oro. Such Honour will engage her to consent :
And then, if you're in Love, she's worth the having.
Shall we not see the Wonder ?

Gov. Have a Care ;

You have a Heart, and she has conqu'ring Eyes.

Oro. I have a Heart : But if it could be false
To my first Vows, ever to love again,
These honest Hands should tear it from my Breast,
And throw the Traitor from me. O ! *Imoinda* !
Living or dead, I can be only thine.

Blan. *Imoinda* was his Wife : She's either dead,
Or living, dead to him : Forc'd from his Arms
By an inhuman Father. Another Time
I'll tell you all.

[*To the Gov.*

Stan. Hark ! the Slaves have done their Work ;
And now begins their Evening Merriment.

Blan. The Men are all in love with fair *Clemene*
As much as you, and try their little Tricks

To entertain her, and divert her Sadness.
 May be she is among them : shall we see ? [Exeunt.

S C E N E III.

*The Scene drawn shews the Slaves, Men, Women
 and Children upon the Ground, some rise and
 dance, others sing the following Songs.*

Air by a Man.

COME let us be gay, to repine is in vain,
 When our Loss we forget, what we lose we regain;
 Our Toils with the Day are all ended at last,
 Let us drown in the present all thoughts of the past,
 All the future commit to the Powers above,
 Come, give me a Smile as an earnest of Love.

*[To a Woman taking her Hand, she rises
 and comes slowly forward.]*

Air by the Woman.

Ah no—it will not, cannot be,
 Love, Love and Joy must still be free;
 The Toils of Day indeed are past,
 And gentle Evening comes at last,
 But gentle Evening comes in vain
 To sooth the Slave from Sense of Pain.

In vain the Song and Dance invite
 To lose Reflection in Delight;
 Thy Voice, thy anxious Heart belies,
 I read thy Bondage in thy Eyes:
 Does not thy Heart with mine agree?

Man. — Yes, Love and Joy must both be free.

Wom. — Must both be free, for both disdain
 The sounding Scourge, and galling Chain:

Man. — 'Tis true, alas! they both disdain
 The sounding Scourge, and galling Chain.

Both together. } Love, Love and Joy must both be free,
 They live not but with Liberty.

[One of the Men comes forward with a Calabash, and offers it.]

Second Man.

Come, forget the Cares that vex ye,
 Drink ; and nothing can perplex ye,
 'Anxious Thoughts at once shall leave ye,
 Doubter, drink and you'll believe me.

[They drink.]

The Governor, Blandford, Stanmore, and Oroonoko enter as Spectators ; and while they are drinking, Captain Driver and several Planters enter with their Swords drawn—a Bell rings.

Capt. Where are you, Governor ? Make what haste you can

To save yourself and the whole Colony.
 I bad 'em ring the Bell.

Gov. What's the Matter ?

1st Plan. The *Indians* are come down upon us :
 They have plunder'd some of the Plantations already,
 and are marching this Way as fast as they can.

Gov. What can we do against 'em ?

Blan. We shall be able to make a Stand, 'till more
 Planters come in to us.

2d Plan. There are a great many more without, if
 you would shew yourself, and put us in Order.

Gov. There's no danger of the white Slaves, they'll
 not stir. *Blandford*, come you along with me : Some
 of you stay here to look after the black Slaves.

*[All go out but the Captain and six Planters,
 who all at once seize Oroonoko.]*

1st Plan. Ay, ay, let us alone.

Capt. In the first Place we secure you, Sir,
 As an Enemy to the Government.

Oro. Are you there, Sir ? You are my constant
 Friend.

1st Plan.

1st Plan. You will be able to do a great deal of Mischief.

Capt. But we shall prevent you: Bring the Irons hither. He has the Malice of a Slave in him, and wou'd be glad to be cutting his Masters Throats. I know him. Chain his Hands and Feet, that he may not run over to 'em. If they have him, they shall carry him on their Backs, that I can tell 'em.

[As they are chaining him, Blandford enters, runs to 'em.]

Blan. What are you doing there?

Capt. Securing the main Chance: This is a Bosom Enemy.

Blan. Away, you Brutes: I'll answer with my Life for his Behaviour; so tell the Governor.

Capt. Plan. Well, Sir, so we will.

[Exeunt Captain and Planters.]

Oro. Give me a Sword, and I'll deserve your Trust.

A Party of Indians enter, hurrying Imoinda among the Slaves; another Party of Indians sustain 'em retreating, followed at a Distance by the Governor with the Planters: Blandford, Oroonoko join 'em.

Blan. Hell and the Devil! they drive away our Slaves before our Faces. Governor, can you stand tamely by, and suffer this? *Clemene*, Sir, your Mistress is among 'em.

Gov. We throw ourselves away, in the Attempt to rescue 'em.

Oro. A Lover cannot fall more glorious, Than in the Cause of Love. He, that deserves His Mistress's Favour, will not stay behind: I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me.

[Oroonoko, at the Head of the Planters, falls upon the Indians with a great Shout, and beats 'em off.]

Enter Imoinda.

Imo. I'm tost about by my tempestuous Fate,
And no where must have Rest; *Indians, or English!*

C 3

Who:

Whoever has me, I am still a Slave.
 No matter whose I am, since I'm no more
 My Royal Master's ; since I'm his no more.
 O I was happy ! nay, I will be happy,
 In the dear Thought that I am still his Wife,
 Tho' far divided from him.

[Draws off to a Corner of the Stage.]

After a Shout enter the Governor with Oroonoko, Blandford, Stanmore, and the Planters.

Gov. Thou glorious Man ! thou something greater
 sure

Than *Cæsar* ever was ! that single Arm
 Has sav'd us all : Accept our general Thanks.

[All bow to Oroonoko.]

And what we can do more to recompense
 Such noble Services, you shall command.

Clemene too shall thank you——she is safe——
 Look up, and bless your brave Deliverer.

[Brings Clemene forward, looking down on the Ground.]

Oro. Bless me indeed !

Blan. You start !

Oro. O all you Gods !

Who govern this great World, and bring about
 Things strange, and unexpected, can it be ?

Gov. What is't you stare at so ?

Oro. Answer me, some of you, you who have Pow'r,
 And have your Senses free : Or are you all
 Struck thro' with Wonder too ? *[Looking still fix'd on her.]*

Blan. What would you know ?

Oro. My Soul steals from my Body thro' my Eyes ;
 All that is left of Life I'll gaze away,
 And die upon the Pleasure.

Gov. This is strange !

Oro. If you but mock me with her Image here :
 If she be not *Imoinda*——

[She looks upon him, and falls into a Swoon, he runs to her.]
 Ha ! she faints !

Nay, then it must be she ; It is *Imoinda* :

My

My Heart confesses her, and leaps for Joy,
 To welcome her to her own Empire here.
 I feel her all, in ev'ry Part of me.
 O! let me press her in my eager Arms,
 Wake her to Life, and with this kindling Kiss
 Give back that Soul, she only lent to me. [*Kisses her.*
Oro. Imoinda! Oh! thy Oroonoko calls.

Imoinda coming to Life.

Imo. My Oroonoko! Oh! I can't believe
What any Man can say. But, if I am
To be deceiv'd, there's something in that Name,
That Voice, that Face ——— [*Staring at him.*
O! if I know myself, I cannot be mistaken
[Run and embraces Oroonoko.

Oro. Never here:
You cannot be mistaken: I am yours,
Your Oroonoko, all that you would have,
Your tender loving Husband.

Imo. All indeed
That I would have: my Husband! then I am
Alive, and waking to the Joys I feel:
They were so great, I could not think 'em true
But I believe all that you say to me:
For Truth itself and everlasting Love
Grows in this Breast, and Pleasure in these Arms.

Oro. Take, take me all: Enquire into my Heart,
(You know the Way to ev'ry Secret there)
My Heart the sacred Treasury of Love:
And if, in Absence, I have misemploy'd
A Mite from the rich Store: if I have spent
A Wish, a Sigh, but what I sent to you;
May I be curs'd to wish, and sigh in vain,
And you not pity me.

Imo. O! I believe,
And know you by myself. If these sad Eyes,
Since last we parted, have beheld the Face
Of any Comfort; or once wish'd to see
The Light of any other Heav'n but you,
May I be struck this Moment blind, and lose

Your blessed Sight, never to find you more.

Oro. Imoinda! O! this Separation
Has made you dearer if it can be so,
Than you were ever to me. You appear
Like a kind Star to my benighted Steps,
To guide me on my Way to Happiness:
I cannot miss it now. Governor, Friend,
You think me mad: But let me bless you all,
Who any Way have been the Instruments
Of finding her again. *Imoinda's found!*
And every Thing that I would have in her.

[*Embracing her in the most passionate Fondness.*]

Stan. Where's your Mistress now, Governor?

Gov. Why, where most Men's Mistresses are forced
to be sometimes,
With her Husband, it seems: But I won't lose her so.

Stan. He has fought lustily for her, and deserves her. [Aside.
I'll say that for him.

Blan. Sir, we congratulate your Happiness: I do
most heartily. [To Oroonoko.

Gov. And all of us; but how it comes to pass —

Oro. That will require
More precious Time than I can spare you now.
I have a thousand Things to ask of her,
And she as many more to know of me.
But you have made me happier, I confess,
Acknowledge it, much happier, than I
Have Words, or Pow'r to tell you. Captain, you,
Ev'n you, who most have wrong'd me, I forgive.
I will not say you have betray'd me now:
I'll think you but the Minister of Fate,
To bring me to my lov'd *Imoinda* here.

Imo. How, how shall I receive you; how be worthy
Of such Endearments, all this Tenderness?
These are the Transports of Prosperity,
When Fortune smiles upon us.

Oro. Let the Fools,
Who follow Fortune, live upon her Smiles.

All our Prosperity is plac'd in Love.
 We have enough of that to make us happy.
 This little Spot of Earth, you stand upon,
 Is more to me than the extended Plains
 Of my great Father's Kingdom. Here I reign
 In full Delights, in Joys to Pow'r unknown;
 Your Love my Empire, and your Heart my Throne.
 [Exeunt.]



A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Enter Aboan with several Slaves and Hotman.

Hot. **W**HAT! to be Slaves to Cowards! Slaves to Rogues! who can't defend themselves!

Abo. Who is this Man? he talks as if he were acquainted with our Design: Is he one of us?

[*Aside to his own Gang.*]

Slav. Not yet: But he will be glad to make one, I believe.

Abo. I think so too, and may be worth the having.

Hot. Go, sneak in Corners; whisper out your Grievs,
 For fear your Masters hear you: Cringe and crouch
 Under the bloody Whip, like beaten Curs,
 That lick their Wounds, and know no other Cure.
 All, Wretches all! you feel their Cruelty,
 As much as I can feel, but dare not groan.
 For my Part, while I have a Life and Tongue,
 I'll curse the Authors of my Slavery.

Abo. Have you been long a Slave?

Hot. Yes, many Years.

Abo. And do you only curse?

Hot. Curse! only curse! I cannot conjure,
 To raise the Spirits up of other Men:
 I am but one. O! for a Soul of Fire,

To

To warm, and animate our common Cause,
And make a Body of us, then I would
Do something more than curse.

Abo. That Body set on Foot, would you be one,
A Limb, to lend it Motion.

Hot. I would be
The Heart of it; the Head, the Hand, and Heart:
Would I could see the Day!

Abo. You will do all yourself.

Hot. I would do more
Than I shall speak, but I may find a Time —

Abo. This Spirit pleases me, and I will trust him. —

[*Aside.*
The Time may come to you; be ready for it. —

Enter Blandford.

We're interrupted now—we'll meet anon.

Blan. If there be any one among you here
That did belong to *Oroonoko*, speak,
I come to him,

Abo. I did belong to him. *Aboan* my Name.

Blan. You are the Man I want; pray come with
me. [Exit all but Hotman.

Hotman alone.

Yes, 'tis as I suspected——this *Aboan*
Has form'd some secret Project to revolt;
My well-feign'd zeal has snar'd him, and he'll trust
me:

Then welcome Liberty!—not that I mean
To trust his Cunning, or the Chance of Arms;
I have a nearer, safer Way to Freedom:
I'll learn the Plot, and watch it Step by Step,
'Till on the Verge of Execution—then,
Just then, betray it; 'twill enhance the Merit,
And make Reward more ample and more sure.

[Exit.

S C E N E

S C E N E II.

Enter Oroonoko and Imoinda.

Oro. I do not blame my Father for his Love:
'Twas Nature's Fault that made you like the Sun,
The reasonable Worship of Mankind:
He could not help his Adoration.
But when I think on his Barbarity,
That could expose you to so many Wrongs;
Driving you out to wretched Slavery,
Only for being mine; then I confess
I wish I could forget the Name of Son,
That I might curse the Tyrant.

Imo. I will bless him,
For I have found you here: Heav'n only knows
What is reserv'd for us: But, if we guess
The future by the past, our Fortune must
Be wonderful, above the common Size
Of Good or Ill; it must be in Extremes:
Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

Oro. 'Tis in our Pow'r to make it happy now.

Imo. But not to keep it so.

Enter Blandford and Aboan.

Blan. My Royal Lord!
I have a Present for you.

Oro. *Aboan!*

Abo. Your lowest Slave.

Oro. My try'd and valu'd Friend.
This worthy Man always prevents my Wants:
I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.
Thou art surpriz'd: Carry thy Duty there;

[*Aboan goes to Imoinda, and falls at her Feet.*
While I acknowledge mine, how shall I thank you?

Blan. Believe me honest to your Interest,
And I am more than paid. I have secur'd
That all your Followers shall be gently us'd.

This

This Gentleman, your chief Favourite, Sir,
Shall wait upon your Person; while you stay
Among us.

Oro. I owe every thing to you.

Blan. You must not think you are in Slavery.

Oro. I do not find I am.

Blan. Kind Heav'n has miraculously sent
Those Comforts, that may teach you to expect
Its farther Care, in your Deliverance.

Oro. I sometimes think myself, Heav'n is concern'd
For my Deliverance.

Blan. It will be soon;
You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,
Appear as chearful as you can among us.
You have some Enemies, that represent
You dangerous, and would be glad to find
A Reason, in your Discontent, to fear:
They watch your Looks. But there are honest Men,
Who are your Friends: You are secur'd in them.

Oro. I thank you for your Caution.

Blan. I will leave you:

And be assur'd, I wish your Liberty. [Exit Bland.

Abo. He speaks you very fair.

Oro. He means me fair.

Abo. If he should not, my Lord?

Oro. If he should not?

I'll not suspect his Truth: But if I did,
What shall I get by doubting?

Abo. You secure
Yourself from Disappointment: But besides,
There's this Advantage in suspecting him:
When you put off the Hopes of other Men,
You will rely upon your God-like Self:
And then you may be sure of Liberty.

Oro. Be sure of Liberty! what dost thou mean;
Advising to rely upon myself?

I think I may be sure on't: We must wait:

'Tis worth a little Patience. [Turning to Imoinda.

Abo. O my Lord!

Oro.

Oro. What dost thou drive at?

Abo. Sir, another Time

You would have found it sooner: But I see
Love has your Heart, and takes up all your Thoughts.

Oro. And can'st thou blame me?

Abo. Sir, I must not blame you.

But, as our Fortune stands, there is a Passion
(Your Pardon, Royal Mistress, I must speak)
That would become you better than your Love:
A brave Resentment; which inspir'd by you,
Might kindle and diffuse a gen'rous Rage
Among the Slaves, to rouse and shake our Chains,
And struggle to be free.

Oro. How can we help ourselves?

Abo. I knew you when you wou'd have found a Way.
How, help ourselves! the very *Indians* teach us:
We need but to attempt our Liberty,
And we carry it. We have Hands sufficient,
Double the Number of our Master's Force,
Ready to be employ'd. What hinders us
To set 'em then at Work? We want but you,
To head our Enterprize, and bid us strike,

Oro. What would you do?

Abo. Cut our Oppressors Throats.

Oro. And you would have me join in your Design
Of Murther?

Abo. It deserves a better Name:
But be it what it will, 'tis justify'd
By Self-defence, and natural Liberty.

Oro. I'll hear no more on't.

Abo. I am sorry for't.

Oro. Nor shall you think of it!

Abo. Not think of it!

Oro. No, I command you not.

Abo. Remember, Sir,

You are a Slave yourself, and to command
Is now another's Right. Not think of it!
Since the first Moment they put on my Chains,
I've thought of nothing but the Weight of 'em,
And

And how to throw 'em off: Can yours sit easy?

Oro. I have a Sense of my Condition,
As painful, and as quick, as yours can be.
I feel for my *Imoinda* and myself;
Imoinda, much the tenderest Part of me.
But, tho' I languish for my Liberty,
I would not buy it at the Christian Price
Of black Ingratitude: They shall not say,
That we deserv'd our Fortune by our Crimes.
Murder the Innocent!

Abo. The Innocent!

Oro. These Men are so, whom you would rise against,
If we are Slaves, they did not make us Slaves;
But bought us in the common Way of Trade:
As we have done before 'em, bought and sold
Many a Wretch, and never thought it wrong.
They paid our Price for us, and we are now
Their Property, a Part of their Estate,
To manage as they please. Mistake me not,
I do not tamely say, that we should bear
All they could lay upon us: But we find
The Load so light, so little to be felt,
(Considering they have us in their Pow'r,
And may inflict what Grievances they please)
We ought not to complain.

Abo. My Royal Lord!

You do not know the heavy Grievances,
The Toils, the Labours, weary Drudgeries,
Which they impose; Burdens more fit for Beasts,
For senseless Beasts to bear, than thinking Men.
Then if you saw the bloody Cruelties
They execute on every slight Offence;
Nay, sometimes in their proud, insulting Sport,
How worse than Dogs they lash their Fellow Creatures;
Your Heart would bleed for 'em. Oh! could you know
How many Wretches lift their Hands and Eyes
To you for their Relief!

Oro. I pity 'em,
And wish I could with Honesty do more.

Abo.

Abo. You must do more, and may, with Honesty,
 O Royal Sir, remember who you are,
 A Prince, born for the Good of other Men :
 Whose God-like Office is to draw the Sword
 Against Oppression, and set free Mankind :
 And this I'm sure you think Oppression now.
 What tho' you have not felt these Miseries,
 Never believe you are oblig'd to them :
 They have their selfish Reasons, may be, now,
 For using you so well : But there will come
 A Time, when you must have your Share of 'em.

Oro. You see how little Cause I have to think so :
 Favour'd in my own Person, in my Friends ;
 Indulg'd in all that can concern my Care,
 In my *Imoinda's* soft Society. [*Embracing her.*]

Abo. And therefore would you lie contented down
 In the Forgetfulness, and Arms of Love,
 To get young Princes for 'em ?

Oro. Sayst thou ! ha !

Abo. Princes, the Heirs of Empire, and the last
 Of your illustrious Lineage, to be born
 To pamper up their Pride, and be their Slaves ?

Oro. *Imonida!* save me, save me from that Thought.

Imo. There is no Safety from it : I have long
 Suffer'd it with a Mother's labouring Pains ;
 And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,
 While I am blest, and happy in your Love ;
 Rather than let me live to see you hate me :
 As you must hate me : me, the only Cause,
 The Fountain of these flowing Miseries.

Oro. Shall the dear Babe, the eldest of my Hopes,
 Whom I begot a Prince, be born a Slave ?
 The Treasure of this Temple was design'd
 T' enrich a Kingdom's Fortune : Shall it here
 Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd Hands,
 To be employ'd in Uses most profane ?

Abo. In most unworthy Uses ; think of that ;
 And while you may, prevent it. O my Lord,
 Rely on nothing that they say to you.

They

They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait:
 But think what 'tis to wait on Promises,
 And Promises of Men who know no Tie
 Upon their Words, against their Interest:
 And where's their Interest in freeing you?

Imo. O! where indeed, to lose so many Slaves?

Abo. Nay, grant this Man, you think so much your
 Friend,

Be honest, and intends all that he says;
 He is but one; and in a Government,
 Where, he confesses, you have Enemies,
 That watch your Looks. What Looks can you put on,
 To please these Men, who are before resolv'd
 To read 'em their own way? Alas! my Lord,
 If they incline to think you dangerous,
 They have their knavish Arts to make you so:
 And then who knows how far their Cruelty
 May carry their Revenge?

Imo. To every thing
 That does belong to you, your Friends, and me;
 I shall be torn from you, forced away,
 Helpless and miserable: Shall I live
 To see that Day again?

Oro. That Day shall never come.

Abo. I know you are persuaded to believe
 The Governor's Arrival will prevent
 These Mischiefs, and bestow your Liberty:
 But who is sure of that? I rather fear
 More Mischiefs from his coming. He is young,
 Luxurious, Passionate, and amorous:
 Such a Complexion, and made bold by Power,
 To countenance all he is prone to do,
 Will know no Bounds, no Law against his Lusts.
 If, in a Fit of his Intemperance,
 With a strong Hand he shall resolve to seize,
 And force my Royal Mistress from your Arms,
 How can you help yourself?

Oro. Ha! thou hast rous'd
 The Lion in his Den, he stalks abroad,

And

And the wide Forest trembles at his Roar.
 I find the Danger now: My Spirits start
 At the Alarm, and from all Quarters come
 To man my Heart, the Citadel of Love.
 Is there a Power on Earth to force you from me?
 And shall I not resist it?

Now I am fashion'd to thy Purpose: Speak,
 What Combination, what Conspiracy,
 Would'st thou engage me in? I'll undertake
 All thou would'st have me now for Liberty,
 For the great Cause of Love and Liberty.

Abo. Now, my great Master, you appear yourself,
 And since we have you join'd in our Design,
 It cannot fail us. I have muster'd up
 The choicest Slaves, Men who are sensible
 Of their Condition, and seem most resolv'd:
 They have their several Parties.

Oro. Summon 'em,
 Assemble 'em: I will come forth and shew
 Myself among 'em: if they are resolv'd,
 I'll lead their foremost Resolutions.

Abo. I have provided those will follow you.

Oro. With this Reserve in our Proceedings still,
 The Means that lead us to our Liberty
 Must not be bloody——no——must not be bloody——
 Whate'er the Rage of Passion may suggest.
 'Tis wrong, 'tis base to break the Ties of Honour,
 Merely through Fear that others first shou'd break
 them.

Abo. In Self-Defence, my Lord ——

Oro. I know, I feel,
 All thou can'st say, and more—is there no way? [*Pauses*
 Ye Gods! 'tis Inspiration! what a Thought!
 The very Ship that brought, that made us Slaves,
 Swims in the River still—we'll seize on that,
 And not a Life shall fall——

Abo. And shall we then
 Desert our honest, brave, unhappy Friends——!
 Blast all their Hopes——

D

Oro.

Oro. O! no, we'll go together;
Not one Associate shall be left behind.

Abo. Why farewell then Revenge—it shall be so.—
We shall expect you, Sir—

Oro. You shall not long.

[*Exeunt Oroonoko and Imoinda at one Door,
Aboan at another.*]

S C E N E III.

Enter several Slaves, Conspirators.

1st Slav. 'Tis about the Time now, he'll be here
soon.

2d Slav. Well, but what are we to do?

1st Slav. To do! why we are to be free;

2d Slav. Aye! 'twas lucky this *Aboan* came among
us; when I look at him, and hear him talk, I think
I'm free already.

3d Slav. Why aye, to be sure; such Men as he may
do much.

2d Slav. Why we were all such Men, 'till Slav'ry
broke us.

But what is the Project?

3d Slav. Why we shall hear, we shall hear.

1st Slav. Aye, let *Aboan* alone; I'll warrant he'll
put us in a Way.

2d Slav. There's *Hotman* too; did you hear how he
fir'd, when our Tyrants ran away and left us to the
Indians.

1st Slav. Did I? aye—*Hotman*, in my Opinion, has
as much Spirit as *Aboan*—here they are, coming to-
gether; let us draw back a little: See how earnestly
they talk; don't let us interrupt them.

[*They retire to the Back of the Stage.*]

Enter Hotman and Aboan.

Abo. This is his Scheme; I left him but this Mo-
ment.

Hot.

Hot. I like it not; a glorious Feat indeed,
For Souls of Fire, provok'd by burning Wrongs,
To seize a Ship by Night and steal away,
Our useless Weapons slumb'ring in the Sheath.
Confusion! and our Suff'rings unreveng'd.

Abo. Indeed I thought of more; but is not Freedom,
Without the Chance of Contest, worth Acceptance?

Hot. I know not—to those frigid Clods, perhaps;
To our pale Lords, who only dare to strike
Whom others bind, it might—but not to me—
By all my Wrongs, I thirst for more than Freedom.

Abo. Thy noble Ardour might e'en warm the Dead?
We'll try once more it's Pow'r on *Oroonoko*——
But soft, here are our Friends, and as I think
At Distance comes the Prince—it must be he——

Turning to the Slaves.] Welcome, my Friends, the Prince
is of your Party,
And has engaged to make your Cause his own—
See where he comes ——

Enter Oroonoko.

Here are our Friends, my Lord,
Who ask but your Concurrence to be free.

Oro. If to all these I am the Means of Freedom,
'Tis well I was a Slave—'tis well that here
I've learnt the Wrongs you suffer.

Hot. 'Tis better not to be, than thus to suffer.

Abo. To die at once, than leave our wretched Off-
spring
Heirs of the Chains and Scourges that ——

Oro. No more ——
My Friend here tells me, you have well resolv'd,
[*To the Slaves.*

To make one glorious Effort to be free:
To risk your Lives, and all the threefold Woes
That would attend our unsuccessful Contest.

[*The Slaves look on each other, and answer nothing.*

Hot. (*clamourously*) All, all we risk for Freedom —
and *Revenge*!

[*Oroonoko turns quick, and looks earnestly at Hotman.*

Oro. (*after a Pause*) 'Tis well, 'tis great! — (*turning to the rest*) but I have found the Means
To gain our Purpose by a safer way —

Hot. (*interrupting*) A safer! — let *him* talk of safer
ways

Who holds his Life more dear than great *Revenge*.

[*Oroonoko turns hastily again, and looks at Hotman; fixing his Eyes sometime upon him, without speaking; Hotman at length shews some Signs of Confusion; Oroonoko then turns and speaks to Aboan.*

Oro. Is this the Man whose Zeal you prais'd so
much?

Abo. It is —

Hot. (*more confus'd*) They whisper; yes, I am sus-
pected;

I must talk louder still —

[*Aside.*

Oro. (*still eyeing Hotman*) And is he trusted with
the whole Design?

Abo. He is, my Lord.

Oro. The Marks of Guilt are on him.

Abo. Not so, my Lord —

Oro. Whence his Confusion, then, to meet my Eye?

Abo. Whence his Confusion now, suppose him false?

Oro. Whence! from the Consciousness of Falshood
here,

That which makes Villains start at their own Shadow,
That made him fear my Eye, though it could reach
No farther than the Covering of his Heart —

Ev'n now he trembles, and a sickly Hue
Steals on his Cheeks —

Abo. It does — yet try him farther.

Oro. To try him now he's trusted, boots us nothing.

Abo. Do it, if only to restore our Hope,
Or end the Torments of Suspence —

Oro.

Oro. I will——
Your Zeal, my Friend, I honour; but you know——
[To Hotman.

Hot. That nobler Hopes have set my Soul on Fire,
Than just to steal a Ship, and run away——
If I consent to this, ye Gods! ——

[He affects to speak this loud, but his Voice falters
through his Fear.

Oro. If you do not consent, you will not sure——

Hot. I will not what?—Who is there that suspects
me? [In a great Confusion.

[Oroonoko looks at Aboan, then turns again to
Hotman.

Oro. Suspects, my Friend. Of what should we sus-
pect you?

Abo. (*hastily*) By Heav'ns, if I suspected any present
Of a perfidious View to blast our Hopes,
This Dagger here at once should make him faithful.

[Hotman, staring, attempts to speak; but is over-
come by his Confusion and Terror.

Oro. (*to Aboan*) What think you now?

Abo. By all my Fears, a Coward and a Traytor.

Oro. He'll certainly betray us.

Abo. That he shall not;

For what I swore, I'll do——

Oro. What wilt thou do?

Abo. I'll stop his Mouth before you; stab him here,
And then let him inform.

[Going to stab Hotman, Oroonoko holds him;
Hotman, who keeps his Eye upon them, per-
ceives it with extreme Confusion, and after
some irresolute Gestures steals off unperceiv'd.

Oro. Thou art not mad——

Abo. I wou'd secure ourselves.

Oro. It shall not be this way, it cannot be;
To murder him, is to alarm the rest.

[Turns about and misses Hotman

What, is he gone! ——

Abo. (to the Slaves) Is *Hotman* gone?——

Slav. *Hotman*, my Lord, is gone; but doubt him not.

The stern enquiring Look of Majesty,
We feel its Pow'r, will strike the Mind with Awe :
He dar'd to differ, Sir : but when oppos'd,
[To Oroonoko.]

He felt, confus'd, the Diff'rence of his State——

Oro. Why be it so——

My Fellow-sufferers, and worthy Friends ;
To-morrow, early as the breaking Day,
We rendezvouz behind the Citron Grove :
'Till then, farewell——

[Exeunt Slaves, and Aboan is following them.]

Oro. *Aboan!*

Abo. My Lord.

Oro. 'Twas better not to trust them with our Fears,
Yet let them meet at a more early Time ;
Within this Hour—and then, tho' *Hotman's* false,
We may succeed before we are betray'd——

Abo. We may——I'll after them, and do it.

[Ex. severally.]



A C T IV.

S C E N E, *the Governor's House.*

The Governor and Hotman.

Gov. To seize the Ship, say you ?

Hot. Ev'n so, my Lord.

Gov. And at what Hour ?

Hot. The Hour I cannot tell.

Gov. Was you not trusted then ?

Hot. I was, my Lord ; but he they call the Prince——

Gov. What, *Oroonoko* ?

Hot. The same, my Lord ; a bloody-minded Fellow ;
He

He and another, took it in their Heads
To think I was not quite the Rogue I seem'd,
And if I had not left them wou'd have stabb'd me.

Gov. Indeed——well we must be before-hand with
'em——

Your honest Service to the Government
Shall be rewarded with your Liberty ;
Let's see——

[*Pauses.*

Hot. (aside) Cou'd I have work'd 'em up to farther
Mischief,

My Wages had been more. [Retiring.

Gov. Here, *Hotman*——hark ye,
Let Captain *Driver* come to me this Moment——

[Exit *Hotman*.

Why this is just the Thing I wou'd have wish'd ;
The Laws now take this *Oroonoko* off,
And leave *Imoinda* mine—the Ship secur'd,
His Party will desert him, and with Ease
I then may seize my Prey.—Who waits without?—

Enter Servant.

Go see the Guard be doubled ; bid the Centry
Stand to their Arms ; let Captain *Stanmore* know
He must attend me here on instant Business.

[Exit *Servant*.

Enter Captain Driver.

Captain, what Hands have you on board To-night?

Capt. Not many ; but enough to do the Business—
I learnt it from the Slave I met below.

Gov. I sent him, Sir——

Capt. I know it, Governor ; and I have sent him
With Orders that the Ship shou'd weigh, and stand
From Shore ; 'tis doing, Sir, e'er now.

Gov. Your Crew then, Captain, are not all on
board ?

Capt. No, no ; I'll send them Orders to be ready ;
They'll do for your Prince *Oroonoko* yet.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Here's Captain Stanmore, Sir——

Gov. I'll come——

[Exit Servant.]

Well, Captain, I'll expect you; I shall order
All the Militia under Arms directly,
Here on the Platform.

Capt. You need not fear me. *[Exit severally.]*

S C E N E II, *the Citron-Grove; Moonlight.*

*Enter Oroonoko, Aboan, Imoinda, Slaves, Women,
and Children following.*

Oro. Come on my Friends! see where the rising
Moon

Now shines upon our Purpose! let our March
At once be swift and silent, like her Course;
The Ship surpriz'd, we triumph without Conflict,
Nor mark our Way to Liberty with Blood.

*[As Oroonoko is leading them out, a Slave enters
and prostrates himself before Oroonoko.]*

Slav. My Lord, my Prince——

Oro. What would'st thou say? be brief; stop us not.

Slav. The Villain, *Hotman.*

Abo. Ah!

Oro. Well, what of him?—take Courage—what of
him?

Slav. My Lord, I fear he has betray'd us.

Oro. Why?

Slav. From our last Rendezvous, my Lord, e'en now
I watch'd him to the Governor's; but there
He stay'd not long; I saw as he came out
He spoke to Captain *Driver*, and from him,
I watch'd him still, he hasted to the Ship,
Which, now unmoor'd, lies farther from the Shore;
The Captain and his Crew are up in Arms,
All the Militia out, the Place alarm'd:
They'll soon be here——

Oro. Why we must meet 'em then ; the iron Hand
Of stern Necessity, is now upon us ;
And from the Rack, she drives us to our Swords.

[*Draws.*

The Women and the Children fall behind,
Unfit for Dangers, such as now approach us.
What will become of them !

[*Aboan, who during this Scene expresses the utmost Anguish of Mind by his Gestures and Deportment, at length comes forward ; and prostrating himself before Oroonoko, takes his Foot and sets it upon his Head.*

Oro. Forbear—we're born to Error ; let me raise thee——

I know thee faithful, therefore blame thee not.

Abo. O ! my dear Lord, my Heart drops Blood to think

My hasty eager fond Credulity
Should let that Slave's false seeming thus undo us—

Oro. Name it no more——

Abo. 'Tis lost—'tis ruin'd—and by me ; but this—

[*He suddenly draws a Dagger, and offers to stab himself ; but Oroonoko lays hold of his Hand.*

Oro. Hold ; now you wrong my Design : thus far
Tho'ft only err'd ; but to desert me now,

[*Wresting the Dagger from him.*

Wou'd be a Crime indeed—I need thy Help.

[*Turning to Imoinda.*] Imoinda, you must not expose yourself :

Retire, my Love ; I almost fear for you.

Imo. I fear no Danger ; Life, or Death, I will
Enjoy with you.

Slav. (*alarm'd*) They come, they come—I see 'em ;
they're upon us.

Oro. (*putting himself before Imoinda*) My Person is
your Guard.

[*Enter the Governor, with Hotman and his Rabble ; Captain Stanmore and his Men.*

Abo.

Abo. There is the Villain that betray'd our Cause;
His Life is due to me. ——— [Advancing.

Oro. Hold, you; and you who come against us, hold;
I charge you in a general Good to all,
And wish I could command you, to prevent
The bloody Havock of the murd'ring Sword,
I would not urge Destruction uncompell'd:
But if you follow Fate, you find it here.
Who first advances ———

Enter the Captain, with his Crew.

Capt. Here, here, here they are, Governor:
What, seize upon my Ship!
Come, Boys, fall on ———

[Advancing first, Oroonoko kills him.

Oro. Thou art fall'n indeed;
Thy own Blood be upon thee.

Gov. Rest it there.
He did deserve his Death. Take him away.

[The Body remov'd.

You see, Sir, you, and those mistaken Men,
Must be our Witnesses, we do not come
As Enemies, and thirsting for your Blood.
If we desir'd your Ruin, the Revenge
Of our Companion's Death had push'd it on.
But that we overlook, in a Regard
To common Safety, and the public Good.

Oro. Regard that public Good: Draw off your Men,
And leave us to our Fortune: We're resolv'd.

Gov. Resolv'd! on what? your Resolutions
Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost:
What Fortune now can you raise out of 'em?
Nay, grant we should draw off, what can you do?
Where can you move? What more can you resolve?
Unless it be to throw yourselves away.
Famine must eat you up, if you go on.
You see our Numbers could with Ease compel
What we request: And what do we request?

Only

Only to save yourselves.

[The Women, with their Children, gathering about the Men.]

Oro. I'll hear no more.

Gov. To those poor Wretches, who have been seduc'd
And led away, to all, and ev'ry one,
We offer a full Pardon——

Oro. Then fall on. *[Preparing to engage.]*

Gov. Lay hold upon't, before it be too late,
Pardon and Mercy.

[The Women clinging about the Men, they leave Oroonoko, and fall upon their Faces, crying out for Pardon.]

Slaves. Pardon, Mercy, Pardon.

Oro. Let 'em go all. Now, Governor, I see,
I own the Folly of my Enterprize.
The Rashness of this Action; and must blush
Quite through this Veil of Night, a whitely Shame,
To think I could design to make those free,
Who were by Nature Slaves; Wretches, design'd
To be their Masters Dogs, and lick their Feet.
We were too few before for Victory,
We're still enow to die. *[To Imoinda, Aboan, and his Friends.]*

Enter Blandford.

Gov. Live, Royal Sir;
Live, and be happy long on your own Terms;
Only consent to yield, and you shall have
What Terms you can propose, for you, and yours.

Oro. Consent to yield! Shall I betray myself?

Blan. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair Means,
[To the Governor.]

I came to be a Mediator.

Gov. Try what you can work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too?

Blan. Is this to come against you?

[Offering his Sword to Oroonoko.]
Unarm'd

Unarm'd to put myself into your Hands?
I come, I hope, to serve you.

Oro. You have serv'd me;
I thank you for't: And I am pleas'd to think
You were my Friend, while I had need of one:
But now 'tis past; this Farewel, and be gone.

[*Embraces him.*]

Blan. It is not past, and I must serve you still.
I would make up these Breaches which the Sword
Will widen more, and close us all in Love.

Oro. I know what I have done, and I should be
A Child to think they ever can forgive:
Forgive! Were there but that, I would not live
To be forgiven: Is there a Power on Earth,
That I can ever need Forgiveness from?

Blan. You shall not need it.

Oro. No, I will not need it.

Blan. You see he offers you your own Conditions,
For you, and yours.

Oro. Must I capitulate?
Precariously compound, on stinted Terms,
To save my Life?

Blan. Sir, he imposes none.
You make 'em for your own Security.
If your great Heart cannot descend to treat,
In adverse Fortune, with an Enemy;
Yet sure your Honour's safe; you may accept
Offers of Peace and Safety from a Friend.

Gov. He will rely on what you say to him: [*To Blan.*
Offer him what you can, I will confirm
And make all good: Be you my Pledge of Trust.

Blan. I'll answer with my Life for all he says.

Gov. Ay, do, and pay the Forfeit if you please. [*Aside.*

Blan. Consider, Sir, can you consent to throw
That Blessing from you, you so hardly found, [*Of Imo.*
And so much valu'd once?

Oro. *Imoinda!* Oh!
'Tis she that holds me on this Argument
Of tedious Life: I could resolve it soon,

Were

Were this curs'd Being only in Debate.
 But my *Imoinda* struggles in my Soul:
 She makes a Coward of me, I confess:
 I am afraid to part with her in Death;
 And more afraid of Life to lose her here.

Blan. This Way you must lose her; think upon
 The Weakness of her Sex, made yet more weak
 With her Condition, requiring Rest,
 And soft indulging Ease, to nurse your Hopes,
 And make you a glad Father.

Oro. There I feel
 A Father's Fondness, and a Husband's Love.
 They seize upon my Heart, strain all its Strings
 To pull me to 'em from my stern Resolve.
 Husband and Father! all the melting Art
 Of Eloquence lives in those soft'ning Names.
 Methinks I see the Babe, with Infant Hands,
 Pleading for Life, and begging to be born:
 Shall I forbid his Birth? Deny him Light?
 The heavenly Comforts of all chearing Light?
 These are the Calls of Nature, that call loud;
 They will be heard, and conquer in their Cause:
 He must not be a Man, who can resist 'em.
 No, my *Imoinda*! I will venture all
 To save thee, and that little Innocent:
 The World may be a better Friend to him,
 Than I have found it. Now I yield myself:

[Gives up his Sword.]

The Conflict's past, and we are in your Hands.

*[Several Men get about Oroonoko and Aboan,
 and seize them.]*

Gov. So you shall find you are. Dispose of them,
 As I commanded you.

Blan. Good Heav'n forbid! you cannot mean—

Gov. This is not your Concern.

[To Blandford, who goes hastily to Stanmore.]

Blan. For Heav'n's Sake use your Int'rest with him,
Stanmore.

Gov.

Gov. I must take care of you. *[To Imoinda.]*

Imo. I'm at the End

Of all my Care: Here will I die with him. *[Holding Oro.]*

Oro. You shall not force her from me. *[He holds her.]*

Gov. Then I must. *[They force her from him.]*

Try other Means, and conquer Force by Force:

Break, cut off his Hold, bring her away.

Stan. Dear Governor, consider what you do.

Gov. Away——

Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.

Oro. O bloody Dogs! Inhuman Murderers!

[Imoinda forc'd out of one Door by the Governor and others. Oroonoko and Aboan hurried out of another.] *[Exeunt.]*

Remain Blandford and Stanmore.

Blan. Astonishment confounds me, what a Wretch!

But he shall not betray me to the Pledge

And forfeit of my Honour thus; I'll force——

Stan. No, tho' Resentment's just use gentle Means,
To brave him wou'd ensure the Captive's Death:

Blan. I cannot brook the Wrong, to make my Faith
The Pander to his Cowardice and Lust!

Stan. 'Tis vile indeed, but yet let justice wait,
His Pow'r will not be long, and when your Blow
Will only reach to him, then strike, strike home;
But now, if thou woudest save——

Blan. O! I would save
At my own Life's Expence the trusting, honest,
Deceiv'd, betray'd, insulted *Oroonoko*:

Stan. Then hear me, stoop for once to Intercession,
We may support it with such weighty Reasons,
That he shall not say nay, he shall not dare.

Blan. Not dare! you see he has already dar'd
A Crime that might draw down the Wrath of Heav'n
By Miracle to blast him:

Stan. Yes, but those
Who fear not Heav'n, are most afraid of Men.

Blan. Yet my Resentment he has brav'd ev'n now!

Stan.

Stan. He has, but in the Tumult of his Passion,
With his Dependants round him, before whom
To have been over rul'd had hurt his Pride;
Trust me, to-morrow to your Face and mine
He will not dare to vindicate the Wrong.

Blan. You shall prevail—I'll meet you at his House
Early to-morrow.

Stan. Your Hour?

Blan. At Eight.

Stan. I'll meet you there.

[*Exeunt severally.*]



A C T V.

S C E N E I.

Enter Governor, with Blandford and Stanmore.

Blan. **H**A V E you no Reverence of future Fame?
No Awe upon your Actions, from the
Tongues,

The cens'ring Tongues of Men, that will be free?
If you confess Humanity, believe
There is a God, to punish or reward
Our Doings here: do not provoke your Fate.
The Hand of Heav'n is arm'd against these Crimes,
With hotter Thunderbolts, prepar'd to shoot,
And nail you to the Earth, a sad Example;
A Monument of faithless Infamy.

Gov. Tell me no more of Fame, and breach of Faith,
The publick Good requires that he should die.

Stan. The publick Good must totter, when the Base
Is Fraud, and Craft, and prostituted Honour.

Blan. When Guilt is sanctified by bold Pretences
That Wrong is in its Consequences right,
The Bond that holds Society together

Is broken! Rule and Order at an End,
And Anarchy must desolate the World.

Gov. The Planters hold not these Opinions, Sir,
They think it well that Bloodshed was prevented
By any Means, and now are clamorous
To have this Slave cut off—

Blan. We are not sure, so wretched, to have these,
The Rabble, judge for us: The changing Croud,
The arbitrary Guard of Fortune's Power,
Who wait to catch the Sentence of her Frowns,
And hurry all to Ruin she condemns.

Stan. So far from farther Wrongs, that 'tis a Shame
He should be where he is. Good Governor,
Order his Liberty: He yielded up
Himself, his all.

Blan. He yielded on your Word;
And I am made the cautionary Pledge,
The Gage and Hostage of your keeping it.

Stan. Remember, Sir, he yielded on your Word;
Your Word! which honest Men will think should be
The last Resort of Truth, and Trust on Earth:
What if your Delegate in Pow'r had done
To some dear Friend as you have done to *Blandford*?
Wou'd not Resentment arm'd by Justice strike
For him and for yourself?—You know it wou'd.

[*The Governor seems moved.*]

This Argument he feels—enforce it *Blandford*.

[*Aside to Blandford.*]

Blan. You cannot coolly sure intend the Wrong,
You cannot sure persist in such an Act,
And be sedately cruel and perfidious—

Stan. Besides, the Wretch has now no longer Pow'r
Of doing Harm, were he dispos'd to use it.

Blan. But he is not dispos'd.

Stan. We'll be his Sureties, Sir,

Blan. Yes, we will answer for him now, my Friend,
the Governor, I know will thank us.

Gov. Well, you will have it so, do what you please,
just what you will with him, I give you Leave. [*Exit.*]

Blan.

Blan. We thank you, Sir ; this Way, pray come
with me. [*Exeunt.*]

*The SCENE drawn shews Oroonoko upon his Back,
his Legs and Arms stretch'd out, and chain'd to the
Ground.*

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, &c.

Blan. O miserable Sight ! help every one,
Assist me all to free him from his Chains.

*[They help him up, and bring him forward, look-
ing down.]*

Most injur'd Prince ! how shall we clear ourselves ?

Stan. We are not guilty of your Injuries,
No way consenting to 'em ; but abhor,
Abominate, and loath this Cruelty.

Oro. If you would have me think you are not all
Confederates, all accessory to
The base Injustice of your Governor :
If you would have me live, as you appear
Concern'd for me ; if you would have me live
To thank, and bless you, there is yet a Way
To tie me ever to your honest Love :
Bring my *Imoinda* to me ; give me her,
To charm my Sorrows, and, if possible,
I'll sit down with my Wrongs ; never to rise
Against my Fate, or think of Vengeance more.

Blan. Be satisfy'd, you may depend upon us ;
We'll bring her safe to you, and suddenly.
In the mean Time
Endeavour to forget, Sir, and forgive ;
And hope a better Fortune. [*Exeunt.*]

Oroonoko alone.

Oro. Forget ! forgive ! I must indeed forget,
When I forgive : But while I am a Man,
In Flesh, that bears the living Marks of Shame,
The Print of his dishonourable Chains,

E

I never

I never can forgive this Governor,
 This Villain;
 What shall I do? If I declare myself,
 I know him, he will sneak behind his Guard
 Of Followers, and brave me in his Fears.
 Else, Lion-like, with my devouring Rage,
 I would rush on him, fasten on his Throat,
 Tear a wide Passage to his treacherous Heart,
 And that Way lay him open to the World. *[Pausing.]*
 If I should turn his Christian Arts on him,
 Promise him, speak him fair, flatter, and creep
 With fawning Steps, to get within his Faith,
 I could betray him then, as he has me.
 But am I sure by that to right myself?
 Lying's a certain Mark of Cowardice:
 And, when the Tongue forgets its Honesty,
 The Heart and Hand may drop their Functions too,
 And nothing worthy be resolv'd or done.
 Honour should be concern'd in Honour's Cause,
 Let me but find out
 An honest Remedy, I have the Hand,
 A ministring Hand, that will apply it home. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E, *The Governor's House.*

Enter Governor.

Gov. I would not have her tell me, she consents;
 In Favour of the Sex's Modesty,
 That still should be presum'd; because there is
 A greater Impudence in owning it,
 Than in allowing all that we can do.
 For when a Man has said
 All that is fit, to save the Decency,
 The Women know the rest is to be done.
 I will not disappoint her. *[Going.]*

Enter to him Blandford and Stanmore.

Gov. (impatiently) Well, what's the Matter now?
Blan.

Blan. I'm sorry we intrude, Sir; but our Bus'ness
Will quickly be dispatch'd: We come to seek
Clemene, Sir; we've promis'd *Oroonoko*
To bring her to him.

Gov. You do very well; 'tis kindly done of you:
Ev'n carry her to him with all my Heart.

Stan. You must tell us where she is.

Gov. I tell you! why, don't you know?

Blan. Your Servant says she's in the House.

Gov. No, no, I brought her home at first, indeed;
but I thought it would not look well to keep her here;
I remov'd her in the Hurry, only to take care of her.
What! she belongs to you: I have nothing to do
with her.

Stan. But where is she now, Sir?

Gov. Why, Faith, I can't say certainly: You'll hear
of her at *Parham* House, I suppose: There, or there-
abouts; I think I sent her there.

Blan. I'll have an Eye on him.

[*Aside.*

[*Exeunt all but the Governor.*

Gov. I have ly'd myself into a little Time,
And must employ it: They'll be here again;
But I must be before 'em.

[*Going out, he meets Imoinda, and seizes her.*

Are you come?

I'll court no longer for a Happiness

That is in my own keeping: You may still

Refuse to grant, so I have Power to take.

The Man that asks deserves to be deny'd.

[*She disengages one Hand, and draws his Sword
from his Side upon him; Governor starts and
retires; Blandford enters behind him.*

Imo. He does indeed, that asks unworthily.

Blan. You hear her, Sir; that asks unworthily.

Gov. You are no judge.

Blan. I am of my own Slave.

Gov. Be gone, and leave us.

Blan. When you let her go.

Gov. To fasten upon you.

Blan. I must defend myself.

Imo. Help, Murder, help.

[Imoinda retreats towards the Door, favour'd by Blandford; when they are clos'd, she throws down the Sword, and runs out. Governor takes up his Sword, they fight, close, and fall, Blandford upon him. Servants enter, and part 'em.

Gov. She shall not 'scape me so. I've gone too far, Not to go farther. Curse on my Delay: But yet she is, and shall be in my Power.

Blan. Nay, then it is the War of Honesty; I know you, and will save you from yourself.

Gov. All come along with me, [Exeunt.

S C E N E the last.

Enter Oroonoko.

Oro. To Honour bound! and yet a Slave to Love! I am distracted by their rival Powers, And both will be obey'd. O great Revenge! Thou Raifer and Restorer of fal'n Fame! Let me not be unworthy of thy Aid, For stopping in thy Course: I still am thine; But can't forget I am Imoinda's too. She calls me from my Wrongs to rescue her. No Man condemn me, who has never felt A Woman's Power, or try'd the Force of Love: Love, Love will be My first Ambition, and my Fame the next.

Enter Aboan bloody.

My Eyes are turn'd against me, and combine With my sworn Enemies, to represent This Spectacle of Horror. Aboan! My ever faithful Friend!

Abo. I have no Name That can distinguish me from the vile Earth,

To which I'm going : A poor abject Worm,
That crawl'd a while upon the bustling World,
And now am trampled to my Dust again.

Oro. I see thee gash'd and mangled.

Abo. Spare my Shame, *[He lies down.]*

To tell how they have us'd me : But believe
The Hangman's Hand would have been merciful.

Do not you scorn me, Sir, to think I can
Intend to live under this Infamy.

I do not come for Pity, but for Pardon.

Oro. For Pardon! wound me not with keener Anguish
Than yet I feel, by thinking thou can'st need it :
Thou'st spent an honourable Life with me ;
The earliest Servant of my rising Fame.

[Stooping and embracing him.]

Abo. And would attend it with my latest Care :
My Life was yours, and so shall be my Death.

You must not live ; alas ! you must not live——

Bending and sinking, I have dragg'd my Steps

Thus far, to tell you that you cannot live :

To warn you of those ignominious Wrongs,

Whips, Rods, and all the Instruments of Death,

Which I have felt, and are prepar'd for you.

This was the Duty that I had to pay.

'Tis done, and now I beg to be discharg'd.

Oro. What shall I do for thee ?

Abo. My Body tires,

And will not bear me off to Liberty :

I shall again be taken, made a Slave.

A Sword, a Dagger yet would rescue me.

I have not Strength to go to find out Death,

You must direct him to me.

Oro. Here he is, *[Gives him a Dagger.]*

The only Present I can make thee now :

And, next the honourable Means of Life,

I would bestow the honest Means of Death.

Abo. I cannot stay to thank you : Only this,

The Villain *Hotman*, as I stagger'd hither,

Arm'd with a Sword I met : I wrench'd it from him,

Col.

Collecting all my Strength; and in his Heart,
Stain'd to the Hilt, I left it.

O my dear honour'd Master, if there is
A Being after this, I shall be yours
In the next World; your faithful Slave again.
This is to try. (*Stabs himself*) I had a living Sense
Of all your royal Favours; but this last,
Strikes through my Heart. I will not say, farewell;
For you must follow me. [*Dies.*]

Oro. In Life and Death,
The Guardian of my Honour! Follow thee!
I should have gone before thee: Then perhaps
Thy Fate had been prevented.
Why, why, you Gods! why am I so accurst,
That it must be a Reason of your Wrath;
A Guilt, a Crime sufficient to the Fate
Of any one, but to belong to me?
My Friend has found it, and my Wife will soon:
My Wife! the very Fear's too much for Life:
I can't support it. Where? *Imoinda!* Oh!

[*Going out, she meets him, running into his Arms.*]
Thou Bosom Softness! Down of all my Cares!
Thou art disorder'd, pale, and out of Breath!
If Fate pursues thee, find a Shelter here.
What is it thou would'st tell me?

Imo. 'Tis in vain to call him Villain.

Oro. Call him Governor: Is it not so?

Imo. There's not another sure so great.

Oro. Villain's the common Name of Mankind here,
But his most properly. What! what of him?
I fear to be resolv'd, and must enquire.
He had thee in his Power.

Imo. I blush to think it.

Oro. Blush! to think what?

Imo. That I was in his Power.

Oro. He cou'd not use it?

Imo. What can't such Men do?

Oro. But did he, durst he?

Imo. What he cou'd, he dar'd.

Oro.

Oro. His own Gods damn him then! For ours have none,

No Punishment for such unheard of Crime,

Imo. This Monster, cunning in his Flatteries,
When he had weary'd all his useles Arts,
Leap'd out, fierce as a Beast of Prey, to seize me.
I trembled, fear'd.

Oro. I fear, and tremble now.
What cou'd preserve thee? What deliver thee?

Imo. That worthy Man, you us'd to call your Friend.

Oro. *Blandford.*

Imo. Came in, and sav'd me from his Rage.

Oro. He was a Friend indeed, to rescue thee!
And, for his Sake, I'll think it possible
A Christian may be yet an honest Man.

Imo. O did you know what I have struggled thro',
To save me yours, sure you would promise me
Never to see me forc'd from you again.

Oro. To promise thee! O! do I need to promise?
But there is now no farther Use of Words.
Death is Security for all our Fears.

[Shews Aboan's Body on the Floor.]

Imo. *Aboan!*

Oro. Mangled and torn, resolv'd to give me Time
To fit myself for what I must expect,
Groan'd out a Warning to me, and expir'd.

Imo. For what you must expect?

Oro. Would that were all!

Imo. What! to be butcher'd thus——

Oro. Just as thou seest.

Imo. By barb'rous Hands, to fall at last their Prey!

Oro. I have run the Race with Honour, shall I now
Lag, and be overtaken at the Goal?

Imo. No.

Oro. I must look back to thee.

[Tenderly.]

Imo. You shall not need.

I'm always present to your Purpose, say,
Which Way would you dispose me?

Oro. Have a Care.

Thou'rt

Thou'rt on a Precipice, and dost not see.
Whither that Question leads thee.

I cannot, as I would, dispose of thee ;
And, as I ought, I dare not. Oh *Imoinda* !

Imo. Alas ! that Sigh ! Why do you tremble so ?
Nay, then 'tis bad indeed, if you can weep.

Oro. My Heart runs over, if my gushing Eyes
Betray a Weakness which they never knew,
Believe, thou only, thou could'st cause these Tears :
The Gods themselves conspire with faithless Men
To our Destruction.

Imo. Heav'n and Earth our Foes !
If Heav'n could be pleas'd, these cruel Men
Are not to be entreated or believ'd ;
O ! think on that, and be no more deceiv'd.

Oro. What can we do ?

Imo. Can I do any thing ?

Oro. But we were born to suffer.

Imo. Suffer both,
Both die, and so prevent 'em.

Oro. By thy Death !

O ! let me hunt my travell'd Thoughts again ;
Range the wide Waste of desolate Despair ;
Start any Hope. Alas ! I lose myself,
'Tis pathless, dark, and barren all to me.
Thou art my only Guide, my Light of Life,
And thou art leaving me : Send out thy Beams
Upon the Wing ; let 'em fly all around,
Discover every Way : Is there a Dawn,
A Glimmering of Comfort ? The great God,
That rises on the World, must shine on us.

Imo. And see us set before him.

Oro. Thou bespeak'st,
And goest before me.

Imo. So I would in Love,
In the dear unsuspected Part of Life,
In Death for Love. Alas ! what Hopes for me ?
I was preserv'd but to acquit myself,
To beg to die with you.

Oro. And can'st thou ask it?
I never durst enquire into myself
About thy Fate, and thou resolv'st it all.

Imo. Alas! my Lord! my Fate's resolv'd in yours.

Oro. O! keep thee there: Let not thy Virtue shrink
From my Support, and I will gather Strength,
Fast as I can, to tell thee——

Imo. I must die:
I know 'tis fit, and I can die with you.

Oro. O! thou hast banish'd hence a thousand Fears,
Which sicken'd at my Heart, and quite unmann'd me.

Imo. Your Fear's for me, I know you fear'd my
Strength,
And could not overcome your Tendernefs,
To pass this Sentence on me: And indeed
There you were kind, as I have always found you.

Oro. O! that we cou'd incorporate, be one,
[Embracing her.]

One Body, as we have been long one Mind;
That, blended so, we might together mix,
And, losing thus our Being to the World,
Be only found to one another's Joys.

Imo. Is this the Way to part?

Oro. Which is the Way?

Imo. The God of Love is blind, and cannot find it.
But quick, make Haste, our Enemies have Eyes,
To find us out, and shew us the worst Way
Of parting: Think on them.

Oro. Why dost thou wake me?

Imo. O! no more of Love.
For, if I listen to you, I shall quite
Forget my Dangers, and desire to live:
I can't live yours.

[Takes up the Dagger.]

Oro. There all the Stings of Death
Are shot into my Heart—what shall I do?

Imo. This Dagger will instruct you. [Gives it him.]

Oro. Ha! this Dagger!
Like Fate, appoints me to the horrid Deed.

F

Imo

Imo. Strike, strike it home, and bravely save us both.

There is no other Safety.

Oro. It must be——

But first a dying Kiss——

This last Embrace——

And now——

[*Kisses her.*

[*Embracing her.*

Imo. I'm ready.

Oro. O! where shall I strike?

Is there the smallest Grain of that lov'd Body
That is not dearer to me than my Eyes,
My bosom'd Heart, and all the Life Blood there?
Bid me cut off these Limbs, hew off these Hands,
Dig out these Eyes, tho' I would keep them last
To gaze upon thee: But to murder thee!
The Joy, and Charm of every ravish'd Sense,
My Wife! forbid it, Nature.

Imo. 'Tis your Wife,
Who on her Knees conjures you. O! in Time
Prevent those Mischiefs that are falling on us.
You may be hurry'd to a shameful Death,
And I too dragg'd to the vile Governor;
Then I may cry aloud: When you are gone,
Where shall I find a Friend again to save me?

Oro. It will be so. Thou unexampled Virtue!
Thy Resolution has recover'd mine:
And now prepare thee.

Imo. Thus, with open Arms,
I welcome you, and Death.

[*He drops his Dagger as he looks on her, and
throws himself on the Ground.*

Oro. I cannot bear it.
O let me dash against the Rock of Fate,
Dig up this Earth, tear, tear her Bowels out.
To make a Grave, deep as the Center down,
To swallow wide, and bury us together.
It will not be. O! then some pitying God
(If there be one a Friend to Innocence)

Find

Find yet a way to lay her Beauties down
Gently in Death, and save me from her Blood.

Imo. O rise; 'tis more than Death to see you thus.
I'll ease your Love, and do the Deed myself——

[She takes up the Dagger; he rises in Haste, to take it from her.]

Oro. O! hold, I charge thee, hold.

Imo. Tho' I must own
It would be nobler for us both from you.

Oro. O! for a Whirlwind's Wing to hurry us
To yonder Cliff, which frowns upon the Flood:
That in Embraces lock'd we might plunge in,
And perish thus in one another's Arms.

Imo. Alas! what Shout is that?

Oro. I see 'em coming.
They shall not overtake us. This last Kiss,
And now farewell.

Imo. Farewel; farewell for ever.

Oro. I'll turn my Face away, and do it so.
Now, are you ready?

Imo. Now. But do not grudge me
The Pleasure in my Death of a last Look;
Pray look upon me——Now I'm satisfied.

Oro. So Fate must be by this.

[Going to stab her, he stops short; she lays her Hand on his, in order to give the Blow.]

Imo. Nay, then I must assist you.
Thus, thus 'tis finish'd, and I bless my Fate,
[Stabs herself.]

That, where I liv'd, I die in these lov'd Arms. *[Dies.]*

Oro. She's gone. And now all's at an End with me,
Soft, lay her down; O we will part no more.

[Then throws himself by her.]

But let me pay the Tribute of my Grief,
A few sad Tears to thy lov'd Memory,
And then I follow——*[Weeps over her.]*

But I stay too long. *[A Noise again.]*

The Noise comes nearer. Hold, before I go.

There's something would be done. It shall be so,
And then, *Imoinda*, I'll come all to thee. *[Rises.]*

Blandford and his Party, enter before the Governor and his Party; Swords drawn on both Sides.

Gov. You strive in vain to save him; he shall die.

Blan. Not while we can defend him with our Lives.

Gov. Where is he?

Oro. Here's the Wretch whom you would have.
Put up your Swords, and let not civil Broils
Engage you in the cursed Cause of one
Who cannot live, and now intreats to die.
This Object will convince you.

Blan. 'Tis his Wife! *[They gather about the Body.]*
Alas! there was no other Remedy.

Gov. Who did the bloody Deed?

Oro. The Deed was mine:
Bloody I know it is, and I expect
Your Laws should tell me so. Thus, self-condemn'd,
I do resign myself into your Hands,
The Hands of Justice——But I hold the Sword
For you——and for myself.

[Stabs the Governor and himself, then throws himself by Imoinda's Body.]

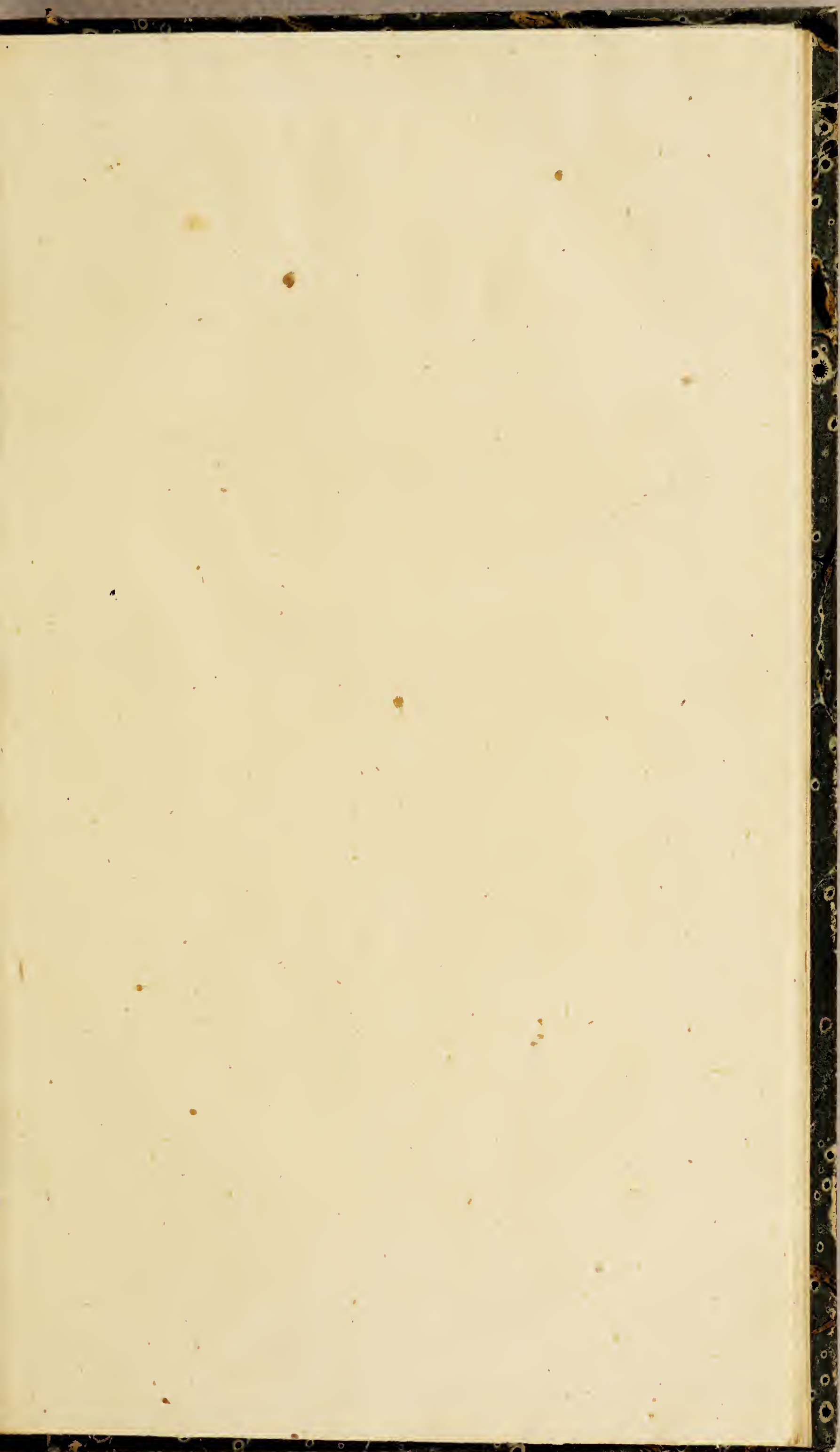
Stan. He has kill'd the Governor, and stabb'd himself.

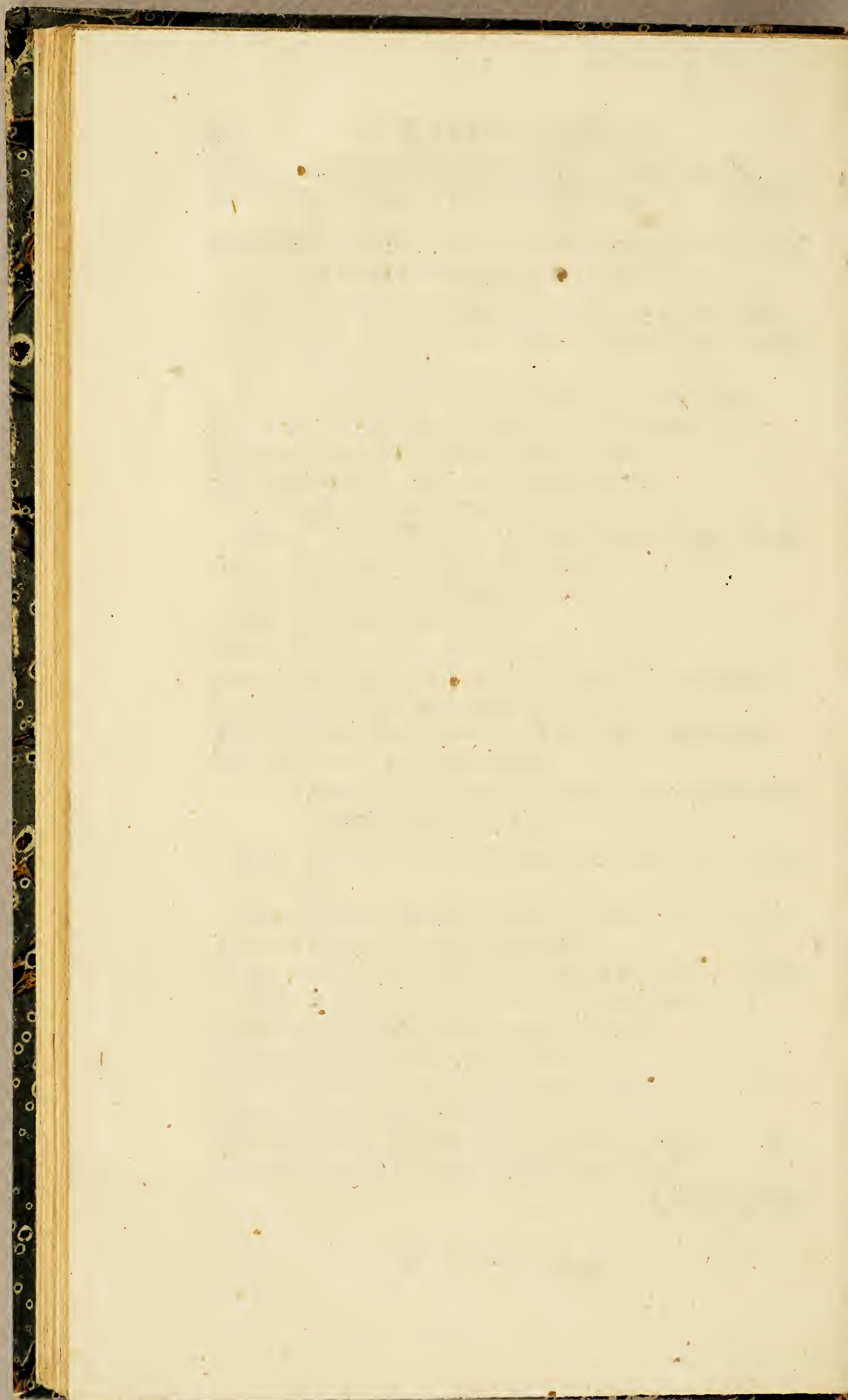
Oro. 'Tis as it should be now; I have sent his Ghost
To be a Witness of that Happiness
In the next World, which he deny'd us here. *[Dies.]*

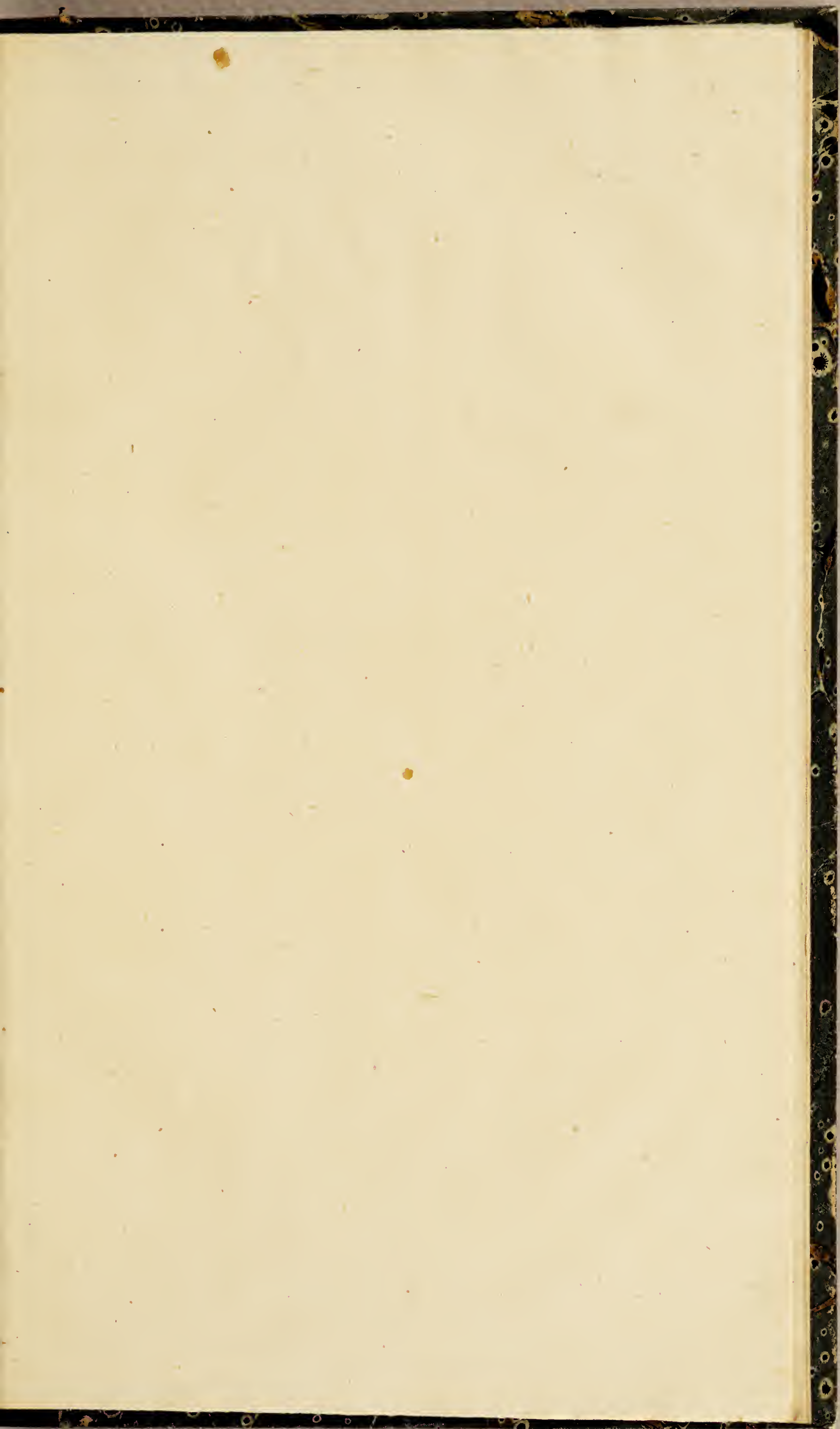
Blan. I hope there is a Place of Happiness
In the next World for such exalted Virtue.
Pagan or Unbeliever, yet he liv'd
To all he knew: And, if he went astray,
There's Mercy still above to set him right.
But Christians, guided by the Heav'nly Ray,
Have no Excuse if they mistake their Way.

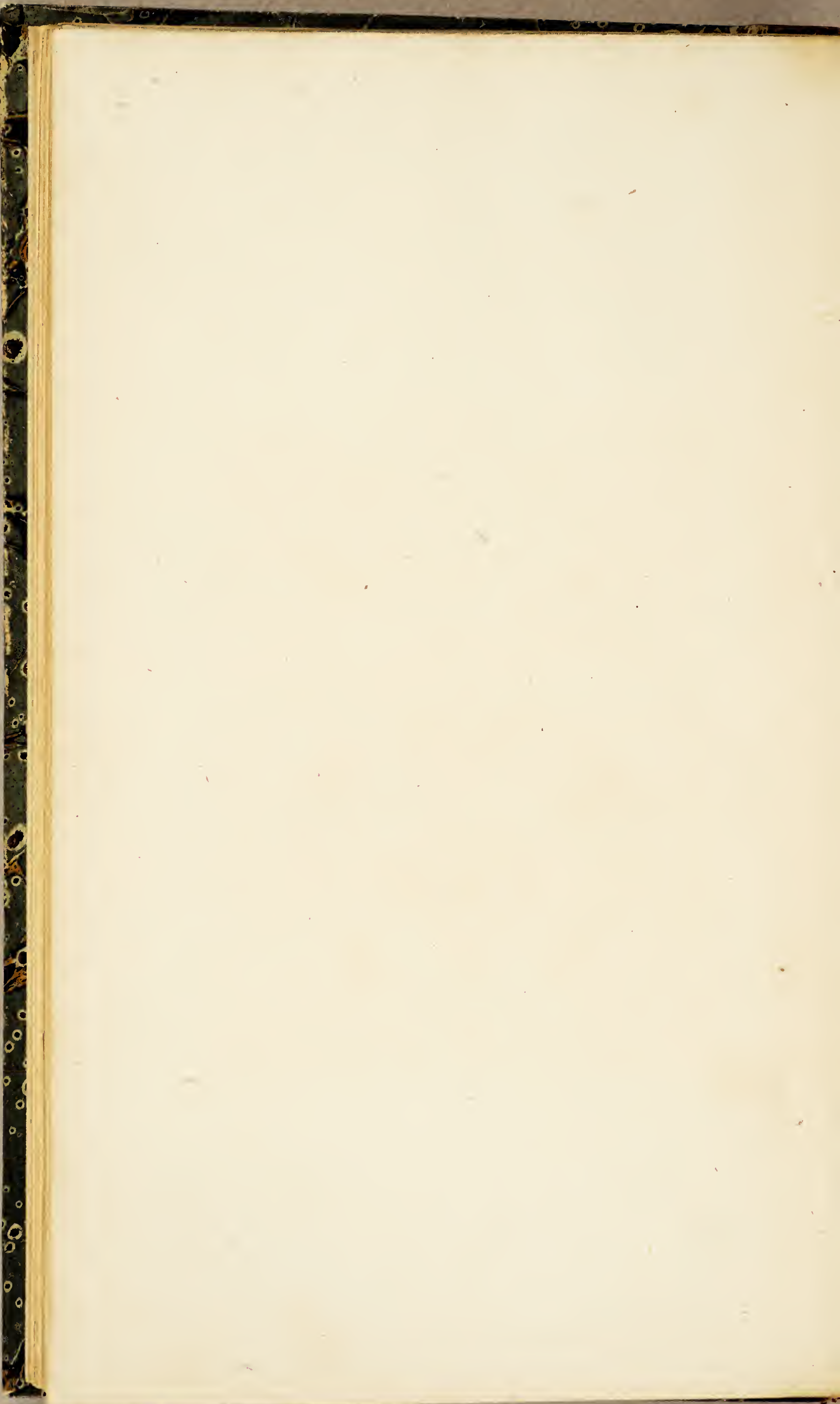
[Exeunt Omnes.]

F I N I S.









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John A. ...

